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THE FABLES OF AESOP

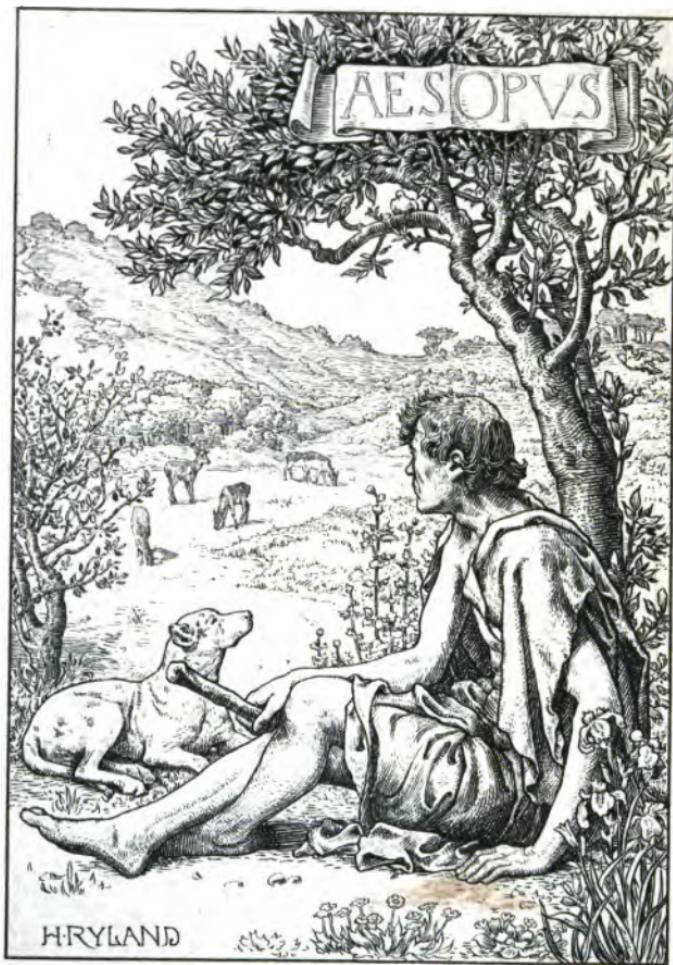


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The Fables of Aesop.

II.

Ballantyne Press
BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
EDINBURGH AND LONDON



o

Bibliothèque de Carabao, 5

The Fables of Esop

as first printed by WILLIAM CAXTON in 1484

with those of Avian, Alfonso and Poggio,

now again edited and induced

by Joseph Jacobs.

II.

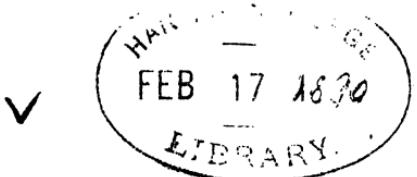
TEXT AND GLOSSARY.



LONDON. PUBLISHED BY DAVID NUTT IN
THE STRAND. M.D.CCCLXXXIX.

~~610,67~~

KPD 5104(2),



1610,67

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¶ Here begynneth the booke
of the subtyl historyes and fables
of Esope whiche were translated
out of Frensshe in to Englysshe
by william Caxton

53

At Westmynstre In the yere of oure Lorde
.m. eccc.lxxvij

CHere begyneth the preface or prologue of
the fyrsyte book of Esope



Romulus son of thybere of the
Cyte of Atyque/ gretynge / Esope
man of grece / subtyll and In-
genyous / techeth in his fables
how men ought to kepe and
rewle them well / And to thende that he
shold shewe the lyf and customes of al maner
of men / he induceth the byrdes / the trees and
the beeftes spekyng to thende that the men
may knowe wherfore the fables were found /
In the whiche he hath wretton the malyce of
the euylle people and the argument of the
Improbis / He techeth also to be humble and
for to vse wordes / And many other fayr En-
samples reherced and declared here after / the
whiche I Romulus have translated oute of grekes
tongue in to latyn tongue / the whiche yf thou
rede them / they shalle aguyse and sharpe thy
wyttē and shal gyue to the cause of Joye /

¶ The first fable is of the cok and of the
precious stome /



s a Cok ones fought his pasture in
the donghylle / he fond a precious
stome / to whome the Cok sayd /
Ha a fayre stome and precious
thow arte here in the fylth And
yf he that desyreth the had found the / as I
haue he wold haue take the vp / and sette the
ageyne in thy fyrst estate / but in vayne I haue
found the / For no thynge I haue to do with
the / ne no good I may doo to the ne thou
to me / And thys fable fayde Esop to them
that rede this book / For by the cok is to
vnderstond the fool which retcheth not of
sapyence ne of wysedome / as the cok retcheth
and setteth not by the precious stome / And by
the stome is to vnderstond this fayre and play-
faunt book

¶ This second fable is of the wulf and the lambe /



Of the Innocent and of the shrewe
Esop reherceth to vs suche a
fable / howe it was so / that the
lambe and the wulf had bothe
thurst / and went both to a Ryuer
for to drynke / ¶ It happed that the wulf dranke
aboue & the lambe dranke byneth / And as the
wulf sawe & percyued the lambe / he sayd with
a hyghe voys / Ha knaue why haft thou troubled
and

and fowled my water/ whiche I shold now drynke /
Allas my lord sauf your grece / For the water
cometh fro yow toward me / Thenne sayd the
wulf to the lambe / Hast thou no shame ne drede
to curse me / And the lambe sayd My lord with
your leue / And the wulf sayd ageyne / Hit is
not fyxe monethes pasyd that thy fader dyd to
me as moche / And the lambe ansuerd yet was
I not at that tyme born / And the wulf said
ageyne to hym / Thou haft ete my fader / And
the lambe ansuerd / I have no teeeth / Thenne
said the wulf/ thou arte wel lyke thy fader /
and for his syne and mysdede thow shalt deye /
The wulf thenne toke the lambe and ete hym /
This fable sheweth that the euylle man retcheth
not by what maner he may robbe and destroye
the good and Innocēt man.

¶ The thyrd fable is of the rat / and of the
frogge /



Now it be so / that as the rat went in
pulgremage / he came by a Ryuer /
and demaunded helpe of a frogge
for to passe / and go over the
water / And thenne the frogge
bound the rats foote to her foote / and thus
swymed vnto the myddes ouer the Ryuer / And
as they were there the frogge stood styll / to
thende that the rat shold be drowned / And in
the meane whyle came a kyte vpon them / and
bothe bare them with hym / This fable made
Esope for a symlytude whiche is proufitable to
many folkes / For he that thynketh evylle ageynst
good / the evil whiche he thynketh shall ones
falle upon hym self.

¶ The fourth fable is of the dogge and the
sheep



f the men chalengyng / whiche ever
be sekyng occasion to doo some
harme and dommage to the good /
faith Espe suche a fable / Som-
tyme was a dogge / whiche de-
maunded of a sheep a loof of brede that she had
borowed of hym / And the sheep ansuerd that
neuer she had none of hym / The dogge made
her to come before the Juge / And by cause the
sheep denyed the dette / the dogge provyfed and
broughte with hym fals wytnes / that is to wete
the wulf / the mylan & the spaehawk / And
whanne these wytnes shold be examyned and
herd / the wulf sayd to the Juge / I am certayne
& me remembreth wel / that the dogge lend to
her a loof of brede / And the myllan went and
sayd / she receyued hit presente my perfone /
And the sperowhawk said to the sheep / come
hyder why denyeest thou that whiche thou hast
take and recyued / And thus was the poure sheep
vaynquyfshed ¶ And thenne the Juge com-
maunded to her that she shold paye the dogge /
wherfore

wherfore she sold awey before the wynter her
flees and wulle for to paye that / that she neuer
had / and thus was the poure sheep despoylled /
In suche maner done the euylle hongry peple
which by theyr grete vntrouthe and malyce
robben and despoillen the poure folke

¶ The fyfthe fable is of the dogge and of the
pyece of flessh

He that defyreth to haue other mens
goodes oft he loseth his owne
good / whereof Esope reherceth to
vs fuche a fable / In tyme passed
was a dogge that wente ouer a
brydge / and held in his mouthe a pyece of
flessh / and as he passed ouer a brydge / he
perceywed and sawe the shadowe of hym /
and of his pyece of flessh within the water /
And he wenynge that it had be another pyece
of flessh / forthwith he thought to haue take
it / And as he opened his mouthe / the pyece
of flessh fyller in to the water / and thus he lost
it / Ryghte soo is of many / for whanne they
thynke to robbe other / they lese theyr owne
and propre good / wherfor for the loue of a vayn
thyng men ought not to leue that whiche is
certeyn.

C The vj fable is of the Lyon and of the cowe/
of the goote and of the sheep



Men sayen that it is not good to ete
plommes with his lord/ ne to the
poure it is not good to have par-
tage and dyuyfyon with hym which
is ryche & myghty / wherof Esope
reherceth suche a fable / The cowe / the gote &
the sheep went ones a hütyng & chase / with the
lyon and toke a herte / And whanne they cake /
[came] to haue theyr parte / the lyon sayd to
them / My lordes I late you wete / that the fyrst
part is myn by cause I am your lord / the secont
by cause / I am stronger than ye be / the thyrd /
by cause I ranne more swifter than ye dyd / and
who so ever toucheth the fourthe parte / he shall
be myn mortal enemy / And thus he took for
hym selfe alone the herte / And therfore this
fable techeth to al folk / that the poure ought
not to hold felauship with the myghty / For
the myghty man is neuer feythfull to the poure

¶ The seventh fable is of the theef and of
the sonne.



O man is chaunged by nature but
of an euyll man maye wel yssue
and come a wers than hymself/
wherof Esope telleth suche a
fable / A theef held the feest of
his weddyng / And his neyghbours came there
as the fest was holden and worshipped / and bare
honour to the theef / And as a wyse man sawe
that the neyghbours of this theef were ioyeful
and glad / he sayd to them / Ye make joye &
gladnes of that / wherof ye sholde wepe / take
hede thenne to my wordes and vnderstond your
ioye / ¶ The sonne wolde ones be maryed / But
alle the Nacions of the world were ageynst hym /
& prayd Iupiter that he shold kepe the sonne
fro weddyng / & Jupiter demaūded of them
the cause why they wolde not haue hym to be
wedded / the one of them said / Iupiter thou
knowest wel / how ther is but one sonne & yet
he brenneth vs al / & yf he be maryed & haue
ony children / they shal destroye al kynde / And
this fable techeth vs that we ought not to be
reioysshed of euyll fellowship /

¶ The viij fable is of the wulf and of the
crane



Ho so euer doth ony good to the
euyll man he synneth as Esope
faith / for of ony good which is
don to the euils cometh no prou-
ffit / wherof Esope reherceth to
vs such a fable / A wulf ete & deuoured a sheep
of whos bones he had one in his throte which he
coulde not haue out & sore it greued hym / thenne
went the wulf & praid the crane that she wold
draw oute of his throte the bone / & the crane
put her nek in to his throte & drewe out the bone
wherby the wulf was hole / ¶ And the crane de-
maunded of hym to be payd of her salary ¶ And
the wulf answerd to her / Thou arte well vn-
cōnyng & no good connyng / remembryng the
good that I haue done to the / for whan thou
haddest thy neck within my throte / yf I had
wold / I might haue ete the / and thus it ap-
piereth by the fable how no proufitte cometh of
ony good whiche is done to the euyle

¶ The ix fable is of the two bytches

It is not good to byleue what flaterers and euyll men saye / for by theyr swete wordes / they deceyue the good folke / whereof Esop reherceth such a fable / This was a bytche which wold lyttre and be delyuerd of her lytyll dogges / and came to the hows of another bytche / & prayd her by swete and fayre wordes that she would lene to her a place for to lyttre her lytyll dogges / And this other lend to her / her bed and her hows wenynge to doo wel / And whan the bytche had lyttred her lytyll dogges / the good bytche sayd to the other / that it was tyme that she shold goo and departe oute of her hows And then the bytche and her young dogges ranne vpon the other / and boote and casted her oute of her owne hows / and thus for to have doo well / grete dommage cometh ofte therfore And ofte the good men lese theyr goodes by the decepcion and flaterye of the peruers and evyll folke /

¶ The tenth fable is of the man and of the
serpent



E that leneth and helpeth the euylle
men / synneth / for after that men
have doo to them some good /
they hurte them afterward / For
as men fayen comynly / yf ye
kepe a man fro the galhows / he shalle neuer
loue yow after / wherof Esope reherceth suche
a fable / ¶ A man was som tyme whiche fond a
serpent within a Vyne / and for the grete wynter
and frost the serpent was hard / and almost dede
for cold wherof the good man had pyte and toke
and bare her in to his hows and leyd her before
the fyre / and so moche he dyd that that she
came ageyne in to her strengthe and vygour /
She beganne thynne to crye and whyftled about
the hows and troubled the good wyf / and the
children / wherfor this good man wold haue her
oute of his hows / And whanne he thoughte to
have take her she sprange after his neck for to
have strangled hym / And thus hit is of the
euyll folk whiche for the good done to them /
they yeld ageyne euyll and deceyuen them whiche
have had pyte on them / And also theyre felau-
ship is not good ne vtyle /

C The xij fable is of the Lyon and of the asse



F them whiche mocken other esope
reherceth such a fable Ther was
an asse which met with a lyon to
whom he said my broder god
faue the & the lyon shaked his
hede and with grete payne he myght hold his
courage / to have forth with deuoured hym /
But the lyon sayd to hym self / It behoueth not
that teethe foo noble and so fayre as myn be
touchen not / ne byten suche a fowle beest / For
he that is wyse must not hurte the foole ne take
hede to his wordes / but lete hym go for suche
as he is

¶ The xij fable is of the two rats



Etter worthe is to lyue in pouerte
 surely / than to lyue rychely beyng
 euer in daunger / Wherof Esop
 telleth fuche a fable / There were
 two rats wherof the one was grete
 and fatte / and held hym in the celer of a Ryche
 man And the other was poure and lene / ¶ On
 a daye this grete and fat ratte wente to sporte
 hym in the feldes and mette by the way the
 poure rat / of the whiche he was receyued as
 well as he coude in his poure cauerne or hole /
 and gaf from of fuche mete as he had / Thenne
 sayd the fatte ratte come thow wyth me / And
 I shalle gyue the wel other metes / He went
 with hym in to the toune / and enterd bothe
 into the celer of the ryche man / the whiche
 celer was full of alle goodes / And when they
 were within the grete rat presented and gaf to
 the poure rat of the delycious metes / saying thus
 to hym / Be mery and make good chere / and
 ete and drynke Joyously / ¶ And as they were
 etynge / the bouteles of the place came in to the
 celer / & the grete rat fled anon in to his hole /

&

B

& the poure rat wist not whyther he shold goo
ne flee / But hyd hym behynd the dore with
grete fere and drede / and the bouteler turned
ageyne and sawe hym not / And whan he was
gone the fatte rat cam out of his cauerne or
hole / and called the poure ratte / whiche yet
was shakynge for fere / and said to hym / come
hyder and be not aferd / & ete as moche as thou
wylt / And the poure rat sayd to hym / for
goddes loue lete me go oute of this celer / For I
haue better ete some corne in the feldes and lyue
surely / than to be ever in this torment / for thou
arte here in grete doubte & lyuest not surely /
And therfore hit is good to lyue pourely &
surely For the poure luyeth more surely than
the ryche

¶ The xiij fable is of the Egle and of the foxe

How the puissant & myghty must
doubte the feble Esope reherceth
to vs suche a fable / Ther was an
Egle whiche came ther as young
foxes were / and took awey one of
them / and gaf hit to his younge Egles to fede
them with The foxe wente after hym & praid
hym to restore and gyue hym ageyne his yong
foxe / and the Egle said that he wold not / For he
was ouer hym lord and maister / ¶ And thenne
the foxe fulle of shrewdnes and malyce beganne
to put to gyder grete habondaunce of straws
round aboute the tree / where vpon the egle and
his yonge were in theyr nest / and kyndeled it
with fyre / ¶ And whan the smoke and the
flambe began to ryse vpward / the Egle ferd-
fulle and doubtyng the dethe of her lytelle egles
restored ageyne the younge foxe to his moder
¶ This fable sheweth vs / how the myghty men
oughte not to lette in ony thyng the small folke /
For the lytelle ryght ofte may lette and trouble
the grete

¶ The xiiij fable is of the Egle whiche bare a
nutte in his becke and of the rauen



e that is sure and wel garnysshed yet
by fals cunceyll may be betrayed /
wherof Esope telleth suche a fable /
¶ An Egle was somtyme vpon a
tree / whiche held with his bylle
a nutte / whiche he coulde not breke / the rauen
came to hym / and sayd / Thow shalt neuer
breke it / tylle thow fleest as hyghe as thow
mayst / and thenne late it falle vpon the stones /
And the Egle beganne to flyhe and lete fall his
proye / and thus he lost his notte / ¶ And thus
many one ben deceyued thorughe fals cunceylle /
and by the fals tongue of other

¶ The xv fable is of the rauen and of the fox



Hey that be glad and Joyfull of the
prayfynge of flaterers oftyme re-
penteth them therof / wherof Esope
reherceth to us such a fable / A
rauen whiche was vpon a tree /
and held with his bylle a chese / the whiche
chese the fox defyred moche to haue / wherfore
the foxe wente and preyfed hym by suche wordes
as folowen / O gentyll rauen thou art the fayrest
byrd of alle other byrdes / For thy fethers ben so
fayr so bright and so resplendysshynge / and can
also so wel synge / yf thou haddest the voys clere
and small, thou sholdest be the moost happy of
al other byrdes / And the foole whiche herd the
flateryringe wordes of the foxe beganne to open
his bylle for to synge / And then the chese fylle
to the grounde / and the fox toke and ete hit /
And whan the rauen sawe that for his vayn
glorye he was deceyued waxed hevy and sorow-
full / and repented hym of that he had byleued
the foxe / And this fable techeth vs / how men
ought not to be glad ne take reioysshynge in the
wordes of caytyf folke / ne also to leue flatery ne
vayn glory

¶ The xvi fable is of the lyon / of the wylde
bore / of the bole & of the asse



Whanne a man hath lost his dignyte or
offyce/ he muste leue his fyrt audy-
cyte or hardyness/ to thende/ that
he be not iniuryed and mocqued of
euyer one / wherof Esope sheweth
vnto suche a fable / There was a lyon whiche
in his yongthe was fyers and moche outragyous /
¶ And when he was come to his old age / there
came to hym a wyldbore / whiche with his
teeth rent and barst a grete pyece of his body
and auenged upon hym of the wrong the lyon
had doo to hym before that tyme / ¶ After
came to hym the boole whiche smote and hurted
hym with his hornes / And an asse came there /
whiche smote hym in the forhede with his feete
by maner of vyndycacion / And thenne the poure
Lyon beganne to wepe fayenge within hym self
in this manere / When I was yonge and uertuous
euyer one doubted and fered me / and now that
I am old and feble / and nyghe to my dethe /
none is that fetteth ne holdeth ought by me /
but of euyer one I am setten aback / I haue lost
alle

alle good and worship / and therfore this fable
admonesteth many one whiche ben enhaunced
in dygnyte and worship shewinge to them / how
they must be meke and humble / For he that
geteth and acquyreth no frendes ought to be
doubtous to falle in suche caas and in suche
peryl

C The xviij fable is of the asse and of the yong dogge



None ought to entermete hym of that what he can not do wherof Esope recyted suche a fable / Of an asse whiche was in the hows of a lord / whiche lord had a lytyle dogge / whiche he loued wel / and gaf hym mete and ete vpon his table / And the lytyle dogge loked and chered / and lepte vpon his gowne / And to alle them that were in the hows he made chere / wherfor

wherfor the asse was enuyous and sayd in hym self / yf my lord and his meyny loue this myfchaunt beste by cause that he chereth and maketh feste to euery body / by gretter reason they ought to loue me vf I make chere to them / Thenne sayd he in hym self / Fro henforth I shall take my disporte and shall make Joye and playe with my lord / and wyth his meyny / And ones as the asse was in this thoughte and ymagynacion / hit happed that he sawe his lord whyche entryd in to his hows / the asse beganne thenne to daunse and to make feest and songe with his swete voys / and approched hym self toward his lord & went & lepte vpon his sholders / and beganne to kyffe and to lykke hym / The lord thenne beganne to crye oute with a hyghe voys and sayd / lete this fowl and payllard / whiche hurteth and byteth me fore / be bete and putt awey / The lordes seruauntes thenne toke anone grete staues / and beganne to smyte vpon the poure asse / and so fore corryged and bete hym / that after he had no luste ne courage to daunse / ne make to nonne chere ne feste / and therfore none ought to entermete hym self for to doo a thynge / whiche as for hym impoffyble is to be done / For the vnwyse displefeth there / where as he supposeth to pleafe

¶ The xvij fable is of the Lyon and of
the rat/



He myghte and puyffant must pardonne and forgyue to the lytyll and feble / and ought to kepe hym fro al euylle / For oftyme the lytyll may wel gyue ayde and help to the grete / wherof Esope reherceth to vs suche a fable Of a lyon whiche slepte in a forest and the rats desportyd and playd aboute hym / It happed that the rat wente vpon the lyon / wherfore the lyon awoke / and within his clawes or ongles he tooke the rat / ¶ And whanne the rat sawe hym thus taken & hold sayd thus to the lyon / My lord pardonne me / For of my deth noughe ye shalle wynne / For I supposyd not to haue done to yow ony harme ne displayfyre / ¶ Thenne thought the lyon in hym self that no worship ne gloriye it were to put it to dethe / wherfor he graunted his pardonne and lete hym go within a lytyll whyle / After this it happed so that the same lyon was take at a grete trappe / and as he sawe hym thus caught and taken / he beganne to crye and make sorowe / and then whan the rat

rat herd hym crye / he approched hym & de-
maunded of hym wherfor he cryed / And the
lyon ansuerd to hym / Seest thou not how I am
take & bound with this gynne / Thenne sayd the
ratte to hym / My lord I wylle not be vnkynde /
but euer I shal remembre the grace whiche thou
hast done to me / And if I can I shall now helpe
the / The ratte beganne thenne to byte the lace
or cord / and so long he knawed it that the lace
brake / And thus the lyon escaped / ¶ Therfore
this fable techeth vs how that a man myghty and
puyssant ought not to dysprayse the lytyll / For
somtyme he that can no body hurte ne lette may
at a nede gyue help and ayde to the grete

C The xix fable is of the mylan whiche was
seke and of his moder



E that euer doth euylle ought not
to suppose ne haue no trust that
his prayer at his nede shalle be
herd / Of the whiche thynge Esope
sheweth to us suche a fable / Of
a mylan whiche was seke / so moche that he had
no truste to recouer his helthe / And as he faw
hym so vexed with feblenes / he prayd his moder
that she shold praye vnto the goddes for hym /
And his moder ansuerd to hym / My sone thou
haft so gretely offendyd and blasphemyd the
goddes that now they wol auenge them on the /
For thou preyst not them by pyte ne by loue /
but for dolour and drede / For he whiche ledeth
euylle lyf / and that in his euylle delynge is ob
stynate / ought not to haue hope to be delyuered
of his euyll / For whan one is fall into extremyte
of his sekenes / thenne is the tyme come that he
must be payed of his Werkes and dedes / For he
that offendeth other in his prosperyte / whan he
falleth in to aduersyte / he fyndeth no frendes /

¶ The xx fable maketh mencion of the swalowe /
and other byrdes



E that byleueth not good cunceyll /
may not fayll to be euylle coun-
ceyld / wherof Esope reherceth
to vs fuche a fable / Of a plowgh
man / whiche sowed lynseed / and
the swalowe seyng that of the same lynseed men
myght make nettes and gynnes / wente and sayd
to al other byrdes / Come with me ye al & lete
vs plucke vp al this / For yf we leue hit growe /
the labourer shal' mowe make therof gunnes and
nettes for to take vs al / Alle the byrdes desprayfed
his counceyl / ¶ And thenne as the swalowe
sawe this / he wente and herberowed her in the
plowgh mans hows / ¶ And whanne the flaxe
was growen and pulled vp / the labourer made
grynnes and nettes to take byrdes / wherwith he
took euery day many other byrdes / and brought
them to his hows / to the whiche byrdes the
swalowe thenne sayd / I told yow wel / what
that shold happe therof / wherfore men ought
not to desprayfe good councylle / For he that is
euyl aduyfed and not wel cunceyled shalle haue
moche Payne

¶ Here synysshed the fyrt booke of Esope /

¶ Here foloweth the prohemye of the second book
of fables of esope / man wyse subtile and
Ingengous



¶ le maner of fables ben found for to shewe al maner of folk / what maner of thyng they ought to ensyewe and folowe / ¶ And also what maner of thyng they must and ought to leue and flee / for fable is as moche to seye in poeterye / as wordes in theologie / ¶ And therfor I shalle wryten fables for to shewe the good condycions of the good men / for the lawe hath be gyuen for the trespacers or mysdoers / And by cause the good ond Juste be not subget to the lawe as we fynde and rede of alle the Athenyens / the whiche lyued after the lawe of Kynde / And also they lyued at theyr lyberte / but by theyre wylle wold haue demaunded a kynge for to punyfhe alle the euyll / but by cause they were not customed to be refourmed ne chastyfed / whan ony of them was corrected / and punyfshed / they were gretely troubled / whan theyr newe kynge made Justyce / For by cause that before that tyme they had
neuer

neuer be vnder no mans subje~~ction~~ / and was
grete charge to them to be in seruytude / wher-
fore they were sorowful that euer they had de-
maunded ony thynge / ageynst the whiche esope
reherceth suche a fable whiche is the fyrst and
formest of this secon~~d~~ book

¶ The fyrist fable is of the frogges and of
Juppter



NO thyng is so good as to lyue Justly
and at lyberte For fredome and
lyberte is better than ony gold or
syluer / wheroft Esope reherceth
to vs such a fable / There were
frogges whiche were in dyches and pondes at
theyre lyberte / they alle to gyder of one assente
& of one wylle maade a request to Jupiter that
he wold gyue them a kynge / And Juppter be-
ganne

ganne therof to merueytle / And for theyr kyng
he casted to them a grete pyece of wood / whiche
maade a grete sowne and noyse in the water /
wheroft alle the frogges had grete drede and
fered moche / And after they approched to theyr
kyng for to make obeyffaunce vnto hym / ¶ And
whanne they perceyued that hit was but a pyece
of wood / they torned ageyne to Jupiter prayenge
hym swetely that he wold gyue to them another
kyng / And Jupiter gaf to them the Heron for
to be theyr kyng / And then the Heron beganne
to entre in to the water / and ete them one after
other / And whanne the frogges sawe that theyr
kyng destroyed / and ete them thus / they beganne
tendyrly to wepe / fayeng in this manere to the
god Jupiter / Ryght byghe and ryght myghte
god Jupiter please the to delyuere vs fro the
throte of this dragon and fals tyraunt which eteth
vs the one after another / And he sayd to them /
the kyng whiche ye haue demounded shalle be
your mayster / For whan men haue that / which
men oughte to haue / they ought to be ioyful
and glad And he that hath lyberte ought to kepe
hit wel / For nothyng is better than lyberte / For
lyberte shold not be wel sold for alle the gold
and syluer of all the world

¶ The second fable is of the Columbes or dounes
of the kyte and of the sperehawke



Ho that putte and submytteth hym
self vnder the faue gard or protec-
tion of the euylle/ thou oughtest
to wete & knowe/ that whan he
asketh & demanded ayde & helpe/
he geteth none/ ¶ Wherof Esope reherceth to
vs fuche a fable/ Of the douues whiche de-
maunded a sperehawke for to be theyr kynge/
for to kepe them fro the kyte or mylan/ And
whanne the sperehawke was maade kynge ouer
them/ he beganne to deuoure them/ the whiche
columbes or douues sayd amonge them/ that
better it were to them to suffre of the kyte than
to be vnder the subjection of the sperehawke/
& to be martyred as we be/ but therof we be
wel worthy/ For we oure self ben cause of this
meschyef/ And therfore whanne men done ony
thyng/ men ought well to loke and consydere
thende of hit/ For he dothe prudently and
wysely whiche taketh good hede to the ende

¶ The thyrde fable is of the theef and of the
dogge

WHanne that one gyueth ony thyng/
men ought wel to take hede/ to
what ende hit is gyuen/ wherof
Esope reherceth suche a fable/
Of a theef which came on a nygt
within a mans hows for to haue robbed hym/
And the good mans dogge beganne to bark at
hym/ And thenne the theef casted at hym a
pyece of brede/ And the dogge sayd to hym/
thow castest not this brede for no good wylle/
but only to the ende/ that I hold my pees/ to
thende that thow mayst robbe my mayster/ and
therfore hit were not good for me/ that for a
morsell of brede/ I shold lese my lyf/ wherfore
goo fro hens/ or els I shalle anone awake my
mayster and alle his meyne/ The dogge theynne
beganne to bark/ and the theef beganne to flee/
And thus by couetyse many one haue oftyme
reseyued grete yeftes/ the whiche haue been
cause of theyr dethe and to lese theyre heedes/

¶ Wherfore

¶ Wherfore hit is good to confydere and loke
wel / to what entencion the yeft in gyuen / to
thende that none may be betrayd thurgh yeftes /
ne that by ony yeftes none maketh some trayson
ageynst his mayster or lord

¶ The fourthe maketh mencyon of the sowe
and of the wulf



T is not good to byleue all suche
thynges as men may here / wherof
Esope sayeth suche a fable / Of a
wulf whiche came toward a sowe
whiche wepte and made forowe
for the grete Payne that she felte / by cause she
wold make her young pygges / And the wulf
came to her sayeng / My suster make thy yonge
pygges surely / for ioyously and with good wylle /
I shalle helpe & serue the / And the sowe sayd
thenne to hym / go forth on thy waye / for I
haue no nede ne myster of suche a seruaunt / For
as longe as thou shalt stonde here I shal not
delyuere me of my charge / For other thyng
thou desyrest not / than to haue and ete them /
The wulf then wente / and the sowe was anone
delyuert of her pygges / For yf she had byleuyd
hym she had done a forowful byrthe / And thus
he that folysihly byleueth it happeth to hym

¶ The syfthe fable maketh menygn of the
montayn whiche shoke



Yght so it happeth / that he that
menaceth hath drede and is ferd-
ful / wheroft Esope reherceth to vs
suche a fable Of a hylle whiche
beganne to tremble and shake by
cause of the molle whiche delued hit / And whanne
the folke sawe that the erthe beganne thus to
shake / they were sore aferd and dredeful / and
durft not wel come ne approche the hylle / But
after whanne they were come nyghe to the mon-
tayne / & knewe how the molle caused this hylle
shakyng / theyr doubte and drede were con-
uerted vnto Joye / and beganne alle to lawhe /
And therfore men ought not to doubte al folk
which ben of grete wordes and menaces / For
some menacen that haue grete doubte

¶ The vi fable is of the wulf and of the lambe



He byrth caufeth no so moche to gete
 some frendes / as doth the good-
 nes / wherof Esope reherceth to vs
 suche a fable / Of a wulf whiche
 fawe a lambe among a grete herd
 of gootes / the whiche lambe sowlketh a gote /
 And the wulf wente and sayd to hym / this gote
 is not thy moder / goo and seke her at the Mont-
 tayn / for the shalle nouryfthe the more swetely
 and more tendyryl than this gote shalle / And
 the lambe ansuerd to hym / This goote nouryftheth
 me instede of my moder / For the leneth to me
 her pappes soner than to ony of her own chil-
 dren / And yet more / hit is better for me to be
 here with these gootes than to departe fro hens /
 and to falle in to thy throte for to be devoured /
 And therfore he is a foole whiche leueth fredome
 or surete / For to put hym self in grete perylle
 and daunger of dethe / For better is to lyue
 surely and rudely in fewre than swetely in peryll
 & daunger

¶ The viii fable speketh of the old dogge and
of his mayster



En ought not to dysprayse the auncyent ne to putte a bak / For yf thow be yonge / thow oughte to desyre to come to old age or auncyente / and also thow ouȝtest to loue and prayse the fayttes or dedes whiche they haue done in theyr yongthe / wherof Esop reherceth to vs fuche a fable / Of a lord whiche had a dogge / the whiche dogge had be in his yonghe of good kynde / For ye wote wel / that of kynde the dogges chacen and hunten in theyr yongthe / and haue grete luste to renne and take the wyld beetes / whan thenne this dogge was come to old age / and that he myght no more renne / It happeth ones that he lete scape and go fro hym an hare / wherfore his mayster was forowfull and angry / and by grete wrathe beganne to bete hym / The dogge sayd thenne to hym / My mayster / of good seruise thow yeldest to me euylle gwerdone & reward / For in my yonge age I ferued the ful wel / And now that I am comen to myn old age / thow betest and settest me

me a bak / haue memorye how in myn yong
age / I was stronge and lusty / And how I made
grete outrages and effors / the whiche caused my
yongthe / And now when I am bycome old and
feble thou settest nought of me / ¶ This fable
techeth that who so euer doth ony good in his
yongthe / in his auncyente and old age he shalle
not contynue in the vertues which he posseled
in his yong age

¶ The viij fable is of the hares and of the
frogges



En say conynly that after that the
tyme goth / so must folke go / For
yf thou makest destinction of the
tyme thou shalt wel accord the
Scryptures / wherof Esope reher-
ceth to vs suche a fable / And sayth thus / that
he whiche beholdeth the euylle of other / must
haue pacyence of the euylle that maye come
vpon hym / For somtyme as a hunter chaced
thurgh the feldes and woodes / the hares beganne
to flee for fere And as they ranne / they adrefsyd
them in to a medowe fulle of frogges / ¶ And
whanne the frogges herd the hares renne they
beganne also to flee and to renne fast / And thenne
a hare whiche perceyued them so ferdfull sayd
to alle his felawes / Lete us no more be dredeful
ne doubtuous / for we be not alone that haue had
drede / For alle the frogges ben in doubte / and
haue fere and drede as we haue / Therfore we
ought not to despayre / but haue trust and hope
to lyue / And yf somme aduerfyte cometh vpon
us / we must bere it pacyently / For ones the
tyme

tyme shalle come that we shalle be oute of payne
and oute of all drede/ Therfore in the vnhappy
and Infortunat tyme men ought not to be def-
payred/ but oughte euer to be in good hope to
haue ones better in tyme of prospertyte/ For after
grete werre cometh good pees/ And after the
rayne cometh the fair weder

¶ The ix fable maketh mencyon of the wulf
and of the kydde



Ood Children ought to obserue and
kepe euer the comaundements of
theyr good parents and frendes/
wherof Esope reciteth to vs suche
a fable/ Of a gote whiche had
made her younge kyde/ and honger toke her foo
that she wold haue gone to the feldes for to ete
some grasse/ wherfore she sayd to her kyd/ My
child/ beware wel/ that yf the wulf come hyder
to ete the/ that thou opene not the dore to hym
¶ And whanne the gote was gone to the feldes/
came the wulf to the dore/ And faynyng the
gotes voyce sayd to the kydde/ My child opene
to me the dore/ And thenne the kydde answerd to
hym/ goo hens euylle and fals beste/ For well
I see the thurgh that hole/ But for to haue me
thow fayneft the voyce of my moder/ ¶ And
therfore I shalle kepe me well fro openyng of
ony dore of this hows/ And thus the good chil-
dren ought euer to kepe wel/ and put in theyr
hert & memory the doctryne and the techyng of
theyr parentes/ For many one is vndone and lost
for faulte of obeyence

¶ The tenth fable is of the good man and
of the serpente

HE that ought not to be assewerd that applyketh and setteth hym to doo somme other eny euyll/ wherof esope reherceth suche a fable/ Of a serpent/ whiche wente & came into the hows of a poure man/ which serpent lyued of that whiche felle fro the poure mans table/ For the whiche thynge happed a grete fortune to this poure man and bycame moche ryche/ But on a daye this man was angry ageynste the serpent/ and took a grete staf/ and smote at hym/ and gretely hurted him/ wherfore the serpente wente oute of his hous And therin he came neuer ageyne/ And within a lytyll whyle after this/ this man retourned and felle ageyne in to grete pouerte/ And thenne he knewe that by the fortune of the Serpent he was bycome ryche/ and repented hym moche of that he smote the serpent/ And thenne this poure man wente and hübled hym before the serpent sayenge to hym/ I praye the that thou wylt pardonne me of thoffense that I have done to the/ ¶ And

¶ And thenne sayd the serpente to the poure
man / Syth thou repenteſt the of thy myſdede /
I pardonne and forgyue it to the / But as longe as
I ſhalle be on lyue / I ſhalle remember me of thy
malyce / For as thou hurteſt me ones / thou
maeſt as wel hurte me another tyme / For the
wounde that thou madeſt to me / may not for-
gete the euylle whiche thou haſt done to me
wherfore he that was ones euylle / ſhalle euer be
preſumed & holden for euylle / And therfore
men ought to preſume ouer hym / by whome
they receyue ſomme dommage and not haue ſu-
pekte theyr good and trewe frendes

¶ The xi fable is of the herte / of the sheep &
of the wulf



He thynge which is promyfed by
force & for drede is not to be
hold/ wherof esope reherceth suche
a fable of a hert which in the
presence of a wulf demaunded of
a sheep that she shold paye a bushel of corn/
And the wulf commaunded to the sheep to paye
hit/ And whanne the day of payment was come
the herte came and demaunded of the sheep his
corn And the sheep sayd to hym/ the conenaunces
and pactyons made by drede and force oughte
not to be holden/ For it was force to me beyng
to fore the wulf to promytte & graunte to gyue
to the that whiche thou neuer lenest to me/ And
therfor thou shalt haue ryght nought of me/
wherfore somtyme it is good to make promisse
of some thynge for to eschewe gretter dommage
or losse/ For the thyngs whiche are done by
force haue none fydelite

¶ The xij fable is of the balled man /
and of the flye /



F a lytyl euylle may wel come a
gretter / Wherof Esope recyteth
suche a fable / Of a flye / whiche
pryked a man vpon his bald hede /
And whanne he wold have smynte
her / she flewgh awey / And thus he smote hym
self / wherof the fly beganne to lawhe / And the
bald man sayd to her / Ha a euylle beeft thou
demaundest wel thy dethe / yf I smote my self
wherof thou lawhest and mocquest me / But yf I
had hytte the / thou haddest be therof slayne /
And therfore men sayen comynly that of the
euylle of other / men ought not to lawhe ne
scorne / But the Iniuryous mocquen and scornen
the world / and geteth many enemyes / For the
whiche cause oftyme it happeth that of a fewe
wordes euyll fette / cometh a grete noyse and
daunger

¶ The xiij fable is of the foxe and of the storke



How oughtest not to doo to other
 that whiche thou woldest not that
 men shold doo to the / wherof
 Esop reherceth to vs such a
 fable / Of a foxe whiche conueyed
 a storke to souper / And the foxe put the mete
 vpon a trauncher / the whiche mete the storke
 myght not ete / wherof she tooke & had grete
 displayfaunce / & wente & departed oute of the
 foxes

D

foxes hows al hungry and wente geyne to her
lodgys/ and by cause that the foxe had thus
begyled her/ she bythoughte in her self/ how
she myght begyle the Foxe/ For as men faye/
it is meryte to begyle the begylers/ wherfore the
storke prayd the foxe to come and soupe with
her/ and put his mete within a glas/ And
whanne the foxe wold haue eten/ he myght not
come ther by/ but only he lycked the glas/ by
cause he cowde not reche to the mete with his
mouthe/ And thenne he knewe wel that he was
deceyued/ And thenne the storke sayd to hym/
Take of fuche goodes as thow gauest to me/
And the poure foxe ryght shameful departed fro
thens/ And with the staf whiche he had made
he was bete And therfore he that begyleth other/
is oftyme begyled hym self/

¶ The xliij fable is of the wulf and of the
dede mans hede



Any one ben whiche haue grete
worship and glorye / but noo pru-
dence / ne noo Wysedom they haue
in them wherof Esope reherceth
suche a fable / Of a wulf which
found a dede mans hede / the whiche he torned
vp so doun with his foote / And sayd / Ha a
how fayr hast thou be and playsaunt / And now
thow hast in the neyther wytte / ne beaute / &
yet thow arte withoute voys and withoute ony
thought / and therfore men ought not only to
behold the beautte and fayrenesse of the body /
but only the goodnes of the courage / For som-
tyme men gyuen glorye and worship to some /
whiche haue not deseruyd to haue hit /

¶ The xv fable is of the Jaye and of the pecok



One ought to were and putte on
hym the gowne of other / wherof
Esope reherceth to vs fuche a
fable Of a Jaye full of vayne
glory / whiche tooke and putte
on hym the fethers of a pecok / and with them
he a[d]ourned / and arayed hym self well / And
whanne he was wel dresfyd and arayed / by his
oultrecuydaunce or ouerwenyng wold haue gone
and conuerced amonge the pecoks / and des-
prayed alle his felawes / And whanne the pecokes
knewe that he was not of theyr kynd / they anone
plucked of alle his fethers / and smote and bete
hym by fuche maner / that no fethers abode
vpon hym / And he fledde away al naked and
bare /

¶ And thenne whanne his felawes sawe
hym / they sayd to hym / What gallaunt come
hyther / where ben thy fayre fethers / whiche
thow haddest but late a gone / Haft thow no
shame ne vergoyne to come in oure companye /

And thenne alle the byrdes cam vpon hym /
and smote & bete hym / fayenge thus to hym /
yf

yf thou haddest be content of thyn owne vesty-
mentes / thow haddest not come to this vylony /
Ther for hit appereth that hit is not good to
were another mans gowne / For fuche weren
fayre gownes and fayr gyrdels of gold that haue
theyr teeth cold at home

¶ The xvj fable is of the mule and of the flye.



Omme maken gretemenaces / whiche
hauue no myghte / ¶ Wherof Esope
reherceth suche a fable / ¶ Of a
carter / whiche ladde a Charyot
or carte / whiche a Mule drewe
forthe / And by cause the Mule wente not fast
ynough / the flye sayd to the Mule / Ha a payllart
Mule / why goost thow not faster / I shalle so
egrely pryke the / that I shalle make the go
lyghtely / ¶ And the Mule answered to the
flye / God kepe and preserue the mone for the
wolues / For I haue ne grete drede ne fere of
the / But I drede and doubte fore my mayster /
whiche is vpon me / whiche constraineth me to
fulfylle his wylle / ¶ And more I oughte to
drede and doubte hym more / than the / whiche
arte nought / and of no valewe ne myght /
¶ And thus men ought not to gette by ne
double them / whiche haue no myght ne that
ben of no valewe

¶ The xviij fable is of the ante and the flye.

TO make boost and auauntyng
wayne glorye and folye / wherof
Esope recyteth suche a fable / Of
the ante or formyce and of the
flye / whiche ftryued to gyder /
for to wete whiche was the most noble of
them bothe / & the flye sayd to the formyce /
Come hyder formyce / wylt thou compare thy
self to me that dwelle in the kynges places and
palays / and ete and drynke at theyr table / And
also I kysse bothe kynge and quene / and the
most fayre maydens / and thou poure and myf-
chaunt beest thou arte euer within the erthe /
And the formyce ansuerd to the flye / Now
knowe I wel thy vanyte and folye / ¶ For thou
auauntest the of that wherof thou sholest def-
prayse the /

For fro alle places where as thou goost or
flyest / thou arte hated chaced and put oute / and
lyuest in grete daunger / for affone as the wynter
shalle come thou shalt deye / And I shal abyde
on lyue alone within my chamber or hole /
where as I drynke and ete at my playfyr / For
the

the wynter shalle not forgyue to the thy myf-
dede / but he shalle flee the / ¶ And thus he
that wylle mocque or despreyse somme other /
he ougt fyrst to loke and behold on hym self /
For men fayn comynly / who that be-
holdeth in the glas / well he feeth hym self /
¶ And who feeth hym self / wel he knoweth hym
self / And who that knowith hym self / lytel he
preyfeth hym self / ¶ And who that preyfeth
hym self lytyll / he is ful wyse and sage.

¶ The xviiiij fable is of the wulf / of the foxe /
and of the ape

HE that ones falleth in to somme
euylle faytte or dede/ he shalle
euer lyue with deshonour and in
fuspcion / of the peple / ¶ And
how be it that by aduenture he
purposed to doo somme prouffitable thynge to
somme other / yet he shold not be trusted ne
byleued / wherof Esope reherceth to vs fuche a
fable / Of a wulf whiche maade the foxe to be
cyted before the Ape / ¶ And the wulf sayd
that the foxe was but a theef and a payllart and
a knaue of poure folke / And the foxe sayd that
he lyed / and that he was a good and trewe man /
And that he dyde moche good /

¶ And thenne the Ape whiche was sette as
a Juge / gaf fuche a sentence / and sayd to the
wulf / Come hyther / thow hast not lost al that
whiche thow demaundest / ¶ And thow Foxe
I beleue wel that thow hast vsurped and robbed
som thynge / howe be it / that thow denyest hit
in Justyce / But for as moche that pees may be
bytwexe yow bothe / ye shalle parte to gyder
your

your good / to thende / that none of yow haue
no hole parte / For he that is wonte and acus-
tomed to robbe and gnawe / with grete payne he
may absteyne hym self fro hit / For a begyler
wylle euer begyle other / ¶ And by cause that
the ape felte them bothe guilty and suspycious
made theyr dyfference to be acorded / and parted
half by half / For they that ben customed to doo
ony frawde or falsohede / shall euer lyue rygte
heuyly and in susipycon

¶ The xix fable is of the man and of the
wesel



En ought wel to loke and behold the
courage & thought of hym/ whiche
dothe good / and the ende / wher-
for he dothe hit / wherof Esope
reherceth fuche a fable / Of a man
whiche tooke a wesell / the whiche chaced after
the rattes wytynne his hows/ ¶ And after
whanne he had taken her / he wold haue kylled
her / ¶ And whanne the poure Weselle fawe
the wrathe and furour of her mayster/ she cryed
to hym / mercy / fayenge thus / My lord I re-
quyre and praye the/ that thou wylt pardonne
to me / and that thou wylt reward me of the
grete seruyse whiche I haue done to the/ For
euer I haue chaced the rats oute of thy hows /

¶ And the man sayd to her / thou dydest not
that for the loue of me / but only thou haft done
it for to fylle thy bely For yf thou haddest done
it for the loue of me / I shold haue pardonné to
the / ¶ And by cause that thou dydest not for
to serue me / but for to lette and adōmage me /
For that the rattes myght not ete / thou bareſt
it

it awey / And soo bycause / that thow arte waxed
fatte of myne owne brede / thow must rendre
and geue to me alle the fatnesse / whiche thou
haft conquered and gotten here / For he that
robbeth shall be robbed / Juxta illud / pellatores
pillabuntur / For hit suffyseth not to doo wel /
but men must haue good wylle and good enten-
cion for to do hit / For an almesse that is done
for vayne glorye / is not merited / but dismeryted /
wherfore I shal not pardonne the / but incon-
tynent and withoute taryenge thow shalt deye /
For by cause that thow haft deseruyd no mercy /
thow shalt now be putte to dethe

¶ The xx fable maketh mencion of the Oxe / and
of the frogge / whiche wold haue compared
her to hym



He poure ought not to compare hym
self to hym which is ryche and
myghty / As sayth this fable of a
frogge / whiche was in a medowe /
when she aspyed and fawe an oxe
whiche pastured / She wold make her self as grete
and as myghty as the oxe / and by her grete
pryde she beganne to swelle ageynste the oxe /
And denaunded of his children yf she was not
as grete as the oxe and as myghty / And theyr
children ansuerd and sayd nay moder / For to
loke and behold on the oxe / it semeth of yow to
be nothyng / And thenne the frogge beganne
more to swelle / ¶ And when the oxe fawe her
pryde / he thradde and thrested her with his fote /
and brake her bely / Therfore hit is not good to
the poure to compare hym self to the ryche /
Wherfore men sayn comynly / Swelle not thy
self / to thende that thou breste not

¶ Here syngysshed the second booke of Esope /

¶ Here begyneth the thyrddde booke of the subtyle
fables of Esope / wherof the fyrsste maketh
mencion / of the lyon / & of the pastour or
herdman



He myghty and puissant oughte not
to be slowfull of the benefetes
done to them by the lytyl and
smalle And oughte not also to for-
gete them / but that they may be
rewarded of them / ¶ And this fable approueth
esope & sheweth vnto vs / of a lyon whiche ranne
after a beest / and as he ranne / a thorne entred
into his foote / whiche hurted and greued hym
gretely / wherfore he moght no ferther goo /
but as wel as he cowde he came to a shepeherd
whiche kepte his sheep and beganne to flatere
with his taylle shewynge to hym hys foote / whiche
was sore hurted and wounded / The shepheard
was in grete drede and casted before the lyon
one of his sheep / But the lyon demaunded no
mete of hym / For more he desyred to be
medycyned and made hole of his foote / ¶ And
after whenne the shepherde sawe the wounde / he
with

with a nydle subtelly drewe oute of his foote the thorne / and had oute of the wound alle the roten fleshe / and enoynted hit with swete oyments / ¶ And anone the lyon was hole / And for to haue rendryd graces and thankys to the shepherd or pastour the lyon kyssed his handes / And after he retorneid ageyn in to the hyest of the woode / And within a lytel whyle after it happed that this lyon was taken and conueyed to the Cyte of Rome and was put amoung the other bestes for to deuoure the myfdoers / Now it befelle that the sayd shepherd commysed a crymynous dede / wherfore he was condempned to be deuoured by these bestes / And ryght so as he was cast among them the lyon knewe hym / and beganne to behold on hym / and made to hym chere and lykked hym with his tongue / And preserued and kepte hym from alle the other bestes / Thenne knewe the shepherd that it was the lyon whiche he maade hole / And that he wold thenne haue recompenſed hym of the good whiche he had done to hym / wherof alle the Romayns were all wonderly abafſhed / And wold knowe the cause of hit And the sheepherd sayd to them as aboue is sayd / ¶ And whanne they knewe the caufe / they gaf leue to the sheepherd / to goo home and fente ageyne the lyon in to the forest / And therfore

therfore this is notary and trewe that al maner
of folke ought to rendre and gyue thankynge
grace and mercye to theyr good doers / For
flowfulnes is a synne / whiche is moche display-
faunt to god

¶ The second fable is of the lyon and of the hors



¶ Che one ought to eschewe dysfymy-
 lyng / fornone ouȝt to were on hym
 the skyn of the wulf / but that he
 wyll be lyke to hym / For none
 ouȝt to fayne hym self other than
 suche as he is / As to vs reherceth this fable /
 ¶ Of a lyon whiche sawe a hors / whiche ete
 grasse in a medowe / And for to fynde somme
 subtylyte and manere for to ete and deuoure
 hym approched to hym / and sayd / God kepe
 the my broder / I am a leche / and with al a good
 pheſycyen / ¶ And by cause that I see that
 thou hast a sore foote / I am come hyther for
 to hele the of hit / And the hors knewe wel
 all his euyell thought And sayd to the lyon /
 My broder I thanke the gretely / and thou arte
 welcome to me / I prey the that thou wylt
 make my foote hole / And thenne the lyon sayd
 to the hors / late see thy foote / And as the lyon
 looked on hit / the hors smote hym on the for-
 hede / In suche wyſe that he brake his hede and
 fyll oute of his mynde / & the lyon felle to the
 ground / and soo wonderly he was hurte / that
 almost

almost he myght not ryse vp agayne / And thenne
sayd the lyon in hym self / I am wel worthy to
haue had this / For he that fercheth euylle /
euyll cometh to hym / And by caufe that I
dyffymyled and fayned my self to be a medycyn /
where as I shold haue shewed mysel a grete
enemye / I therfore haue receyued good reward /
and therfore euery body oughte to shewe hym
self fuche as he is /

¶ The thyrd fable maketh mencion of the asse /
of the hors / & of theyr fortune

HE that is wel fortuned and happy /
and is atte vpperest of the whole
of fortune / may wel falle doun /
And therfore none oughte to def-
prayse the poure / but oughte to
ike how the whole of fortune is moche
stous as shewethe this present fable / Of a
hors whiche was wel harnayfed and arayed /
d his fadel and brydel garnysshed with gold /
hiche hors mete with an asse sore laden in a
narowe way / And by cause that the asse tourned
hym not a bak Incontynent the hors sayd to
hym / Ha a chorle haft thou noo shame ne ver-
goyne / that thou doste ne bereft none worshippe
ne reuerence vnto thy lord / who holdeth now
me / that wyth my foote I breke not thyn hede /
by cause that thou puttest not thy self asyde
and oute of my waye / so that I myght passe
& goo on my waye / The poure asse ansuerd
ne sayd to hym neuer a word / and was sore
aferd that the horse shold haue bete hym / wher-
fore

fore he held his pees as wyfe and sage / And the hors wente his waye / ¶ And within a lytyl whyl after / it befelle / that fortune tourned his whele vp fodoune / For thys fayre hors became old lene and seke / ¶ And whanne his mayster sawe that his hors was thus lene and seke and oute of prosperyte / he comaūded that he shold be had in to the toun and that in stede of his ryche fadel men shold put and sette on his backe a panyer for to bere dounge in to the feldes / Now it happed that the asse whiche was in a medowe etyng grasse perceyued and sawe the hors and wel knewe hym / wherof he was wonder abaffshed / and merueylled moche that he was thus poure and so lene bycome / ¶ And the asse went toward hym and sayd / Ha a felawe. where is now thy fayre fadel / and thy ryche brydel / garnysshed with gold / how arte thou now bycome soo lene and suche a payllard / what haue prouffyted to the thy fayre and ryche rayments / and what auaylled now to thy grete syerste and pryd / and thy grete preumpcion whiche ones thou shewest to me / Thynke now / how thou arte lene and vnthryfty / and how thou and I ben now of one offyce / And the myferable and vnhappy hors was abaffshed / and for shame loked dounward / & ansuerd neuer one word / for alle his felicitie was thenne turned

turned into aduersyte / ¶ And therfore they that
ben in felycite / oughte not to dysprayse them /
whiche ben in aduersyte / For many one I
knewe ryche and myghty / whiche are now
poure

¶ The iijij fable maketh meneyon of the beestes
and of the byrdes



One maye do no good to two lordes
at ones / whiche ben cōtrary one
to that other / as sayth to vs this
fable that the beestes made grete
werre ageynst the byrdes / & fought
euyer day to gyder / And the backe feryng the
wulues And that the beestes shold vaynquyshe
and ouercome the byrdes / wold haue hold with
the beestes / and be ageynst the byrdes / And
whanne the batylle was ordeyned on bothe sydes /
the egle beganne to entre in to the batayll of
the beestes by suche a strengthe / that with the
help of the other byrdes he gat the feld /
and vaynquysched / and ouercame the bestes /
wherfor the bestes maade pees with the byrdes /
and were alle of one accord and of one wylle /
And for the treason that the backe had made /
she was condempned to neuer see the day / And
neuer flee / but only by nyght / And also she was
despoylled of alle her fethers / And therfore he
that wylle serue two lordes cōtrary one to other
may-not be good ne trewe / And they wheche
relynquen

relynquen and leue theyr owne lordes for to
serue another straunger/ whiche is enemy to
theyr lord/ ben wel worthy to be punysshed/
For as the Euangele sayth/ None may serue
bothe god and the deuyl

¶ The v fable is of the nyghtyngale and of
the sperehawk



E that oppresseth the Innocents
shalle haue an euyl ende/ wherof
Esope reherceth to vs suche a
fable/ Of a sperehawk/ whiche
dyd put hym within the nest of
a nyghtyngale/ where he fond the lytyl and
yonge byrdes/ the nyghtyngale came and per-
ceyued hym/ wherfore she praed the spere-
hawk/ sayeng/ I requyre and praye the as
moche as I may/ that thou haue pyte on
my smal byrdes/ And the sperehawk ansuerd
and sayd/ yf thou wylt that I graunte the
thy request/ thou must syng swetely after my
wylle and gree And thenne the nyghtyngale
beganne to syng swetely/ not with the herte/
but with the throte onely/ For he was so fulled
with forowe that otherwyse he myght not doo/
The sperehawk sayd thenne to the nyghtyngale/
This songe playseth me not/ And toke one of the
yonge byrdes and deuoured hit/ And as the sayd
sperehawk would haue deuoured and eten the
other came there a hunter whiche dyd caste a
grete

grete nette vpon the sperehawk / And whanne the
wold haue flean awey / he myght not / for he
was taken / And therfore he that doth harme &
letteth the Innocents / is worthy to deye of euylle
dethe / As Caym dyd whiche flewe his broder
Abel

¶ The seuenth fable is of the foxe and of
the wulf



Ortune helpeth bothe the good and
euylle folke / and to alle them /
whiche she helpeth not she sendeth
euylle to them / And they that
fetten alle theyr malyce ageynste
fortune ben subuertyfed and ouerthrawen by
her / wherof Esope reherceth suche a fable / Of
a wulf whiche had assembled to gyder a grete
proye / or moche mete for to haue lyued more
delyciously / wherof the foxe had grete anuye /
and for to haue robbed somme of this good / he
came vnto the cauerne or hole where as this
proye or mete was in / and sayd to the wulf /
My godsep the wulf / by cause hit is longe fyth I
fawe the / I am in grete heuynesse and sorowe /
and also by cause we haue not been in longtyme
gone chaced and gone to gyder / ¶ And whan
the wulf knewe the malyce of the foxe / he sayd
to hym thow arte not come hyder for to see me /
ne how I fare / but thou arte come for to robbe
and rauyfhe my good / For the whiche wordes
the foxe was moche angry / and wente toward a
sheepherd /

sheepherd / to whome he sayd / yf thou wylt be
auenged of the wulf whiche is enemy of thy heerd
or parke / on this day I shalle put hym under
thy handes / And the shepherd auſuerede to the
foxe in this manere / yf thou doo as thou sayſt /
I ſhall paye the wel / And thenne the foxe
ſhewed to hym the hool / wherin the wulf was /
And the ſhepherd Incontynent wente toward
the hole / and with a ſpere he kyld the wulf /
And by this manere the foxe was wel fylded and
refreſhyed of the good of the other / but as he
returned home ward / he was tuke and deuoured
by ſomme dogges / wherfore he ſayd to hym ſelf /
by cauſe that ryght euylle I haue done / euylle
cometh thou to me / For fynne retorneth euer
vpon his mayſter / And he that lyueth but of
rauyn and robberye ſhal at the laſt be knownen
and robbed /

¶ The seventh fable is of the herte and of the
hunter



En preyfен somtyme that / that
shold be blamed & vitupered /
And ofte men blamen & vytu-
peren that / that shold be preyfed /
as reciteth to vs this fable of a
herte / To whome it happyd on a tyme that he
drank in a fonteyn or welle as he dranke / he
sawe in the water his hede which was horned /
wherfore he preyfed moche his hornes / And
as he loked on his legges / whiche were
lene and smal / he despreyfed and vytupered
them / And as he was drynkynge in the fontayne
he herd the voys and barkynge of dogges /
wherfore he wold haue fledde awey in to the
forest for to saue hym self / but as he sawe the
dogges so nyghe hym he wold haue entred within
a bushe / but he myght not / for his hornes
kepte hym withoute / And thenne seyng that
he myght not escape began to faye within hym
self / I haue blamed and vytupered my legges /
whiche haue ben to me vtyle and prouffitable /
and haue preyfed my hornes / whiche ben now
caufe

cause of my dethe / And therfore men ought to
desprayse that thynge / whiche is vnprouffitable /
and preyse that whiche is vtyle and prouffitable /
And they ought to preyse and loue the chirche and
the commaundements of the same / the whiche
ben moche vtyle & prouffytable / And despreyse
and flee al synne and vyce / whiche ben inutyle
harmeful and dommageable

¶ The viij table maketh mencion of Juno / of
Venus / and of the other wyymmen



Efore the goddes and the goddesSES
men muste euer preyse chaftyte /
for it is a worshipful & an honest
thyng to a woman to hold hyr
contente with a man alone / but
Venus for her desporte & for to dryue aweye the
tyme / wold Interprete the sayenge of the hennes /
wherfore she demaunded a henne whiche was
in her hows / but at this tyme I shal kepe my
tongue / and no ferther I shalle speke therof /
For many wyse men whiche haue sene and
redde alle this book vnderstaniden wel alle the
nature of hit / and by cause it is lycyte & honest /
And that we alle ben bounden to kepe the ladyes
in theyre worship and honour / also that in euery
place where hit shalle be possyble to vs we ought
to preyse them / We shalle now cesse to enquire
ferther of this matere / and historyye / whiche
we shall leue in latyn for the grete clerkes / & in
especial for them that wylle occupye theyr tyme
to judge and rede the glose of the sayd Esope

¶ The mynthe fable is of the knyght and of
the wyf dore



He woman whiche luyeth in this
world without reproche or blame
is worthely to be gretely preyfed /
Wherof Esope reherceth such a
fable of a man and of a woman /
whiche loued moche eche other / It happed thenne
by the effors of Atropos or dethe / the whiche
we al must suffer that the sayd man deyde /
And as men wold haue borne hym in to his
graue / whiche was withoute the toune there to
be buryed / his wyf made grete sorowe and wepte
pyteously / And whanne he was buryed / she wold
abyde styll vpon the graue / and lete do make a
lytyll lodge or hows therupon / and oute of this
lodge she wold neuer departe for no prayer ne
fayr word / neyther for ony yeftes ne for menaces
of her parents Now it befell in the toun that a myf-
doer was condampned to be hanged / ¶ And to
thende that he shold not be taken fro the gallows /
hit was thenne commaunded that a knyght shold
kepe hym / And as the knyght kepte hym / grete
thurste took hym / And as he perceyued the lodge
of

of the sayd woman he wente to her / and prayd
her to gyue hym somme drynke / And she with
good herte gaf hym to drynke / And the knyght
dranke with grete appetyte / as he that had grete
thurstfe / & whan he had dronke / he torned ageyne
to the galhows ward / This knight came another
tyme to the woman for to comforde her / And
thre tymes he dyd soo / And as he was thus goyng
and comynge / doubtynge hym of nobody / his
hanged man was taken and had fro the galhows /
And whanne the knyght was come ageyne to
the galhows & sawe that he had loste his dede
man / he was gretely abafshed & not withoute
cauise For hit was charged to hym vpon peyne
to be hanged / yf he were take awey / This
knyght thenne seynge his Judgement / tourned
and went ageyne to the sayd woman / & cast
hym at her feete / and laye before her as he
had be dede / And she demaūded of hym / My
frend / what wylt thou that I doo for the / Allas
sayd he / I praye the that thou focoure and
cunceylle me now at my grete nede / For by
cause I haue not kept wel my theef / whiche
men haue rauyfshed fro me / the kynge shalle
make me to be put to dethe / And the woman
sayd / Haue no drede my frend / For well I shalle
fynde the manere wherby thou shalt be delyuerd /
For we shall take my hufbond / and shalle
hange

hange hym in stede of thy theef/ ¶ Thenne
beganne she to delue / and tooke out of the erthe
her husbond / and at nyȝt she hanged hym at
the galhows in stede of the other / and sayd to
the knyght / My ryght dere frend I pray the
that this be kept well secrete / For we doo hit
theefly / and thus the dede men haue somme /
whiche make forowe for them / but that forowe
is sone gone and paffyd / And they whiche ben
on lyue haue some whiche drede them / but
theyr drede wantith and faylleth whan they ben
dede

¶ The tenth fable maketh menyon of the yong
man / and of the comyn woman



F the comyn and folyshe wymmen
Esope reherceth to vs suche a
fable / Of a woman whiche had
to name Tahys / the whiche was
cause by her feyned loue of the
dethe and losse of many yonge men / to one of the
whiche she had be bete ofte before that tyme /
she sayd to hym in this wyse / My ryght dere
loue and good frende / I suppose that of many
one I am wel byloued and despred / Neuertheles
I shall sette my loue on thy self alone / wherfore
I pray the that thou mayit be myn / and I shalle
be thyn for alle thy goodes I retche not / but
only I desyre thy swete body / And he that
knewe the feynyte and falsheed of the woman /
ansuered to her / ryght benyngly and swetely / thy
wyll and the myn ben both but one alone / For
thow arte she whiche I moost desyre / and the
whiche I shalle loue all the terme of my lyf / Yf
thow deceyue me nomore / For by cause that
thow haft decyued me in tyme passed / I am
euer aferd of the / but notwithstandingyng this /
thow

thow arte now moche playfaunt and fayr to the
syghte of me / And thus the one begyled that
other / For the loue of a comyn woman is not to
be trusted / For thow oughtest to knowe and
thynk within thy self/ that the comyn and
folysch woman loue the not / but she loueth thy
syluer

¶ The xij fable is of the fader and of the
euylle sone



He good and wyse fader ought to
chastyse his children in theyr yong
age / and not in theyr old age /
For thenne hit is moche dyffycyle
to make them bowe As to us
reciteth this fable / Of a fader of famylle /
whiche had a sone / the whiche dyd no thynge
that he oughte to haue done / but euer was
goyng and playeng in the toune / And the
fader for the cryme and myfrewle of his sone
brawled euer and bete his meynys / And sayd to
them suche a fable / Of a ploughman or la-
bourer / whiche bond a bole by the hornes to
an oxe The booll wold not be bound / and
smote strongly whith his feet after the man / and
launched his hornes at hym / ¶ And at the last
whan he was bound / the labourer sayd to them
I haue ioyned and bound you bothe to gyder /
to thende that ye doo somme labour / But I wyll
that the lefft of yow two / that is to wete the
boole / be lerned and corryged of the moft
whiche is the oxe / For I must sayd the labourer
to

to hym self bynde them thus to gyder / to thende
that the bole / whiche is yong fyen and maly-
cious and strong / smyte ne hurte nobody /
wherof grete dommage myght come to me / But
by cause that I bote well / that the oxe shalle
teche and corryge hym wel / I haue put and
bound them bothe to gyder / ¶ Thus this fable
sheweth to vs / that the fader ought to teche and
gyue good ensample to his children and chaftyse
them whanne they be yong For he that well
loueth / wel he chaftyseth

¶ The xij fable is of the serpent



He Auctor that is to wete Esope
 reherceth to vs suche a fable of
 two euyls/ fayeng that a serpent
 entryd som tyme within the forge
 of a smythe / for to ferche somme
 mete for her dyner/ It happed / that she fond a
 fyle whiche she beganne to gnawe with her
 teethe/ Thenne sayd the fyle to her / yf thou
 byte and gnawe me / yet shalt thou doo to me
 no hurte / but bytyng and gnawyng on me /
 thou shalt hurte thyn owne self/ For by my
 strengthe alle the yron is planed by me / And
 therfore thou arte a foole to gnawe me / For
 I telle the / that none euyll may hurte ne adom-
 mage another as euylle as he / Ne none wycked
 may hurte another wycked / ne also the hard
 ageynst the hard shalle not breke eche other /
 ne two enuyous men shal not both ryde vpon an
 asse / wherfor the myghty and stronge must loue
 hym whiche is as myghty and as strong as hym
 self is

¶ The xiij fable is of the wulues and of
the sheep



Hanne men haue a good hede / and
a good defensour / or a good Capi-
tayne / men oughte not to leue
hym / for he that leueth hym re-
penteth hym after ward of hit / as
to vs reherceth this fable / Of the sheep whiche
had werre and descencion with the wolues / And
by cause that the wulues made to stronge werre
ageynst the sheep / the shepe thenne tooke for
theyr help the dogges / and the whethers also /
And thenne was the bataylle of the sheep so grete
and so stronge / & fought so vygorously ageynst
the wolues that they put them to flyȝt ¶ And
whanne the wolues sawe the strengthe of theyr
aduersaries / they sent an ambassade toward the
sheep for to trete the pees with them / the whiche
Ambassade sayd to the sheep in this maner / yf
ye wylle gyue us the dogges / we shalle swere
vnto yow oure feythe / that we shalle neuer kepe
ne hold werre ageynst yow / And the sheep
ansuerd / yf ye wylle gyue vs your sayth / we
shalle be content / And thus they made pees to
gyder /

gyder / but the wulues kyld the dogges / whiche
were capytayns and protectours of the sheep /
And the dogges dyde but lytyll hurteto the wulues /
wherfore whanne the lytyl and yong wulues
were growen in theyr age / they came of eche
part and countrey / and assembled them to gyder /
and all of one accord and wylle sayd to theyr
auncestres and faders / we must ete vp alle the
sheep / And theyr faders ansuerd thus to them /
we haue made pees with them / Neuertheles the
yonge wolues brake the pees and ranne fyeryly
vpon the sheep / and theyr faders wente after
them / ¶ And thus by cause that the sheep had
delyuerd the dogges to the wolues / the whiche
were theyr capitayns / and that they had none
that kepte them / they were all eten and deuoured
of the wulues / Therfore hit is good to
kepe well his capytayne / whiche may at a nede
gyue socor and helpe / For a trewe frend is
oftyme better at a nede than a Royalme / For
yf the sheep had kepte the loue of the dogges /
the wolues had neuer deuoured them / wherfore
it is a sure thyng to kepe wel the loue of his
protectour and good frende /

¶ xiiij fable is of the man and of the wood

He that gyueth ayde and help to his enemy is cause of his dethe / as recyteth this fable of a man whiche made an axe / And after that he had made his axe / he asked of the trees / and sayd / ye trees gyue yow to me a handle / and the trees were content / ¶ And whanne he had maade fast his handle to the axe / he began to cutte and throwe doun to the ground alle the trees / wherfore the oke and the ashe sayd / yf we be cutte / hit is wel ryght and reason / For to oure owne self we ben cut and throwen doun / ¶ And thus hit is not good to put hym self in to the daunger and subiection of his enemye / ne to helpe hym for to be adōmaged / as thou maist see by this presente fable / For men ought not to gyue the staf by whiche they may be beten with

C The xv fable is of the wulf and of the dogge.



yberete or freedome is a moche swete
 thynge/ as Esope reherceth by
 this fable/ of a wulf and of a
 dogge whiche by aduenture mette
 to gyder/ wherfore the wulf de-
 maulded of the dogge/ wherof arte thou so
 fatte and so playfaunt/ And the dogge ansuerd
 to hym/ I haue wel kepte my lordes hows/ &
 haue barked after the theues whiche came in the
 hows of my mayster/ wherfore he and his meyny
 gyue to me plente of good mete/ wherof I am
 fatte and playfaunt/ and the wulf sayd thenne
 to hym/ It is wel sayd my broder/ Certaynly
 syth thou arte so wel atte thyn eafe and farest so
 wel I haue grete desyre to dwelle with the/ to
 thende that thou & I make but one dyner/ wel
 sayd the dogge/ come on with me yf thou wylt
 be as wel at thyn eafe as I am/ and haue thou
 no doubte of no thynge/ The wulf wente with
 the dogge/ and as they wente by the way/ the
 wulf beheld the dogges neck/ whiche was al
 bare of here/ and demaunderd of the dogge/
 My broder why is thy neck so shauen/ And the
 dog

dog ansuered / it is by cause of my grete coler
of yron / to the whiche dayly I am fasted / And
at nyght I am vnbound for to kepe the hows the
better / Thenne sayd the wulf to the dogge /
This I wyshe ne nede not / For I that am in
lyberte / wylle not be put in no subiection / And
therrefor for to fylle my bely / I wylle not be
subget / yf thou be acustommed for to be bound /
contynue thow in hit / and I shalle lyue as I
am wonte and acustomed / therfore there is no
rychesse gretter / than lybete / for lyberte is
better than alle the gold of the world /

¶ The xvj fable maketh mencion of the handes /
of the feet / and of the mans bely



Ow shalle one do ony good to another / the whiche can doo no good to his owne self / as thou mayst see by this fable / Of the feet and of the handes / whiche somtyme had grede stryf with the bely / sayenge / Al that we can or may wynne with grete labour thou eteſt it all / and yet thou dooſt no good / wherfore thou ſhalt no more haue nothyng of vs / and we ſhalle lete the deye for honger / And thenne when the bely was empty and fore hongry / ſhe beganne to crye and ſayd Allas I deye for honger / gyue me ſomwhat to ete / and the feet and handes ſayd / thou geteſt no thyng of vs / and by cauſe that the bely myght haue no mete / the conduyts thorough whiche the metes paſſeth became ſmal and narowe / And within fewe dayes after the feete and handes for the feblenes whiche they felte wold thenne haue guuen mete to the bely / but it was to late / for the conduits were ioyned to gyder And therfore the lymmes myght doo no good to other / that

is

is to wete the bely / And he that gouerneth not
wel his bely withe grete Payne he may hold the
other lymmes in theyr strengthe and vertue /
wherfore a seruaunt ought to serue wel his
mayster / to thende that his mayster hold and
kepe hym honestly / and to receyue and haue
good reward of hym / when his mayster shalle
see his feythfulnesse

C The wif fable is of the Ape and of the foxe.

F the poure and of the Ryche Esope
reherceth suche a fable / Of an
ape / whiche prayd the foxe to
gyue hym somme of his grete
taylle for to couere his buttokes
therwith / sayenge thus to hym / what auaylleth
to the foo long a taylle / hit doth but wagge /
And that whiche letteth the / shalle be prouffit-
able and good for me / The foxe said to hym
I wold that hit were yet lenger / For rather I
wold see hit al to fowled and dagged / than hit
shold bere to yow suche honour / as to couere
thy fowle buttoks therwith / And therfore gyue
thou not that thyng of whiche thou haft nede
of / to the ende that afterward thou myster not
of hit

¶ The xvij fable is of the marchaunt and
of the asse

Many one ben trauaylled after theyr
dethe / wherfore men ought not
to desyre the dethe / As reherceth
Esope by this fable / Of a mar-
chaunt whiche ladde an asse laden
vnto the market / And for to be the sooner at
the market / he bete his asse / and sore pryked
hym / wherfore the poure asse wysshed & desyred
his owne deth / wenyng to hym that after his
dethe he shold be in reste / And after that he
had be wel bete and chaced he deyde / And
his mayster made hym to be flayne / and of his
skynne he dyd doo make tumbours whiche ben
euer bete / And thus for what Payne that men
may haue durynge his lyf / he ought not to
desyre and wyssh his dethe / For many one
ben / whiche haue grete Payne in this world
that shall haue a gretter in the other world /
For the man hath no reste for the dethe but for
his merytes

¶ The xix fable is of the herte and of the axe



Nely for to flee is assured to scape
 the daunger wherfore he fleeth /
 As thow shalt nowe see by this
 fable / Of a herte whiche rane
 byfore the dogges / and to thende
 that he shold not be take / he fledde in to the
 fyrst toun that he found / & entryd in to a stable
 where as many oxen were / to whom he sayd the
 cause why he was come ther / prayeng them
 swetely that they wold faue hym / And the
 oxen sayd then to hym / Allas poure herte thou
 arte amonge vs euylle adressyd / thou sholdeit
 be more surely in the feldes ¶ For yf thou be
 perceyued or sene of the oxherd or els of the
 mayster / Certaynly thou arte but dede / Helas
 for god & for pyte I praye yow that ye wylle
 hyde me within your rackinge / and that ye deceyue
 me not / and at nyght next comynge / I shalle
 goo hens / and shalle putte my self in to a sure
 place / ¶ And whanne the seruaunts came for
 to gyue hey to the oxen / they dyd cast heye
 before the oxen / and wente ageyne theyre waye
 and sawe not the hert / wherof the herte was
 gretely reioysched wenynge to haue scaped the
 perylle

perylle of dethe / He thenne rendred thanke
and grace to the oxen / and one of the oxen sayd
to hym / It is facyle to scape out of the handes
of the blynd but hit is not facyle to scape out of
the handes of hym that feeth wel / For yf oure
mayster come hyther whiche hath more than an
honderd eyen / Certayn thou arte deed yf he
perceyue the ¶ And yf he see the not / cer-
taynly thou arte sauad / and shalt goo forthe on
thy waye surely /

The mayster within a short whyle after entryd
in to the stable / And after he commaunded to
vyfyte and see the hey / whiche was before his
oxen / And hym self went and tafted / yf they
had ynough of hit / And as he tafted thus the
heye / he felt the hornes of the herte with his
hand / and to hym self he sayd / what is that
that I fele here / and beyng dredeful called alle
his seruauntes / and demaunded of the manere
how the herte was come thyder / And they sayd
to hym / my lord I knowe nothynge therof /
And the lord was full gladde and made the
herte to be taken and layne / and maade a grete
feest for to haue ete hym / Therfore it happeth
ostyme / that he whiche supposeth to flee is
taken and hold within the lace or nette / For he
that fleeth awey is in grete perylle / wherfore
men ought wel to kepe them self to doo fuche
dede / that they must nedes flee therfore

G

C The xx fable maketh mencion of the fallace of
the Lyon / And of his conuersacion



O conuerse with folke of euylle lyf
is a thyng moche peryllous / And
only to speke with them letteth
moch other / As this fable reher-
ceth of a lyon ryght strong and
ryght myghty / the whiche made hym self kyng
for to haue grete renommee and glorye / And fro
thenne forthon he beganne to chaunge his con-
dycions and customme shewing hym self curtois /
and swore that he shold hurte no bestes / but
shold kepe them ageynst euery one / And of this
promesse he repented hym by cause hit is moche
dyffycyle and hard to chaunge his owne kynd /
And therfore whanne he was angry / he lad
with hym somme smalle beeftes in to a secrete
place for to ete and deceyue them / And de-
maunded of them / yf his mouthe stanke or not /
And alle they that sayd that it stanke or not
were al sauued / And alle they the whiche an-
suered not he kylled / & deuoured them al / It
happed that he demaunded of the Ape / yf his
mouthe stanke or not / And thape sayd no but
that

that hit smelleth lyke bame/ And thenne the
lyon had shame to flee the ape/ but he fond a
grete falsheed for to put hym to dethe/ He
fayned to be seke and commaunded that al his
leches & Cyrurgyens shold anone come vnto hym /
whan they were come / he commaunded them
to loke his vryne / And whan they had sene hit /
they sayd to hym / Syre ye shalle foone be hole /
But ye must ete lyght metes / And by cause
that ye be kynge / alle is at your commaundement /
And the lyon ansuerd Allas Ryght fayne
I wold ete of an Ape / Certaynly sayd the
medecyn that fame is good mete / Thenne was
the Ape sente for And notwithstandingyng that
he worshipfully spak and ansuerd to the kynge /
the kynge made hym to dye / and deuoured
hym ¶ Therfore hit is peryllous and harmeful
to be in the felauiship of a Tyraunt / For be hit
euylle or good he wylle ete and deuoure euery
thyng / And wel happy is he / that may escape
fro his blody handes / And that may eschewe
and flee the felauiship of the eyyll tyraunt

¶ Here syngsshed the thredde booke of the
subtyle fables of Escape /

¶ The fyrt fable maketh menyon of the foxe
and of the raysyns



HE is not wyse / that desyreth to haue
a thynge whiche he may not
haue / As reciteth this fable Of
a foxe / whiche loked and beheld
the raysyns that grewe vpon an
hyghe vyne / the whiche raysyns he moche
desyred for to ete them ¶ And whanne he
fawe that none he myght gete / he torned his
fowre in to Ioye / and sayd these raysyns ben
fowre /

sowre / and yf I had some I wold not ete them /
And therfore this fable sheweth that he is wyse /
whiche fayneth not to desyre that thyng the
whiche he may not haue /

¶ The second fable is of the auncynt wesel and
of the rat /



Ytte is better than force or strengthe/
As reherceth to vs this fable of
an old wesel / the whiche myghte
no more take no rats / wherfore
she was ofte sore hongry and be-
thought her that she shold hyde her self with-
ynne the flowre for to take the rats whiche came
there for to ete hit. And as the rats came to the
floure / she took and ete them eche one after
other / And as the oldest rat of all perceyued
& knewe her malyce / he sayd thus in hym
self / Certaynly I shalle kepe me wel fro the /
For I knowe alle thy malyce & falshede ¶ And
therfore he is wyse that scapeth the wytte and
malyce of eylle folke / by wytte and not by
force

¶ The thirde fable is of the wulf and of the
shepherd and of the hunter



Any folke shewe themself good by
theyr wordes whiche are ful of
grete fantasyes/ As reherceth to
vs thys fable of a wulf whiche
fledde byfore the hunter / and as
he fledde he mette with a sheepherd / to whome
he said my frende I praye the that thou telle
not to hym that folowith me whiche wey I am
gone / & the sheep herd said to hym haue no
drede ne fere nothynge / For I shalle not accuse
the / For I shalle shewe to hym another way /
And as the hunter came / he demaunded of the
shepherd yf he had sene the wulf passe / And
the hunter both with the heed and of the eyen
shewed to the hunter the place where the wulf
was / & with the hand and the tongue shewed
alle the contrarye / And incontynent the hunter
vnderstood hym wel / But the wulf whiche per-
ceyued wel all the fayned maners of the sheep-
herd fled away / ¶ And within a lytyl whylle
after the sheepherd encountered and mette with
the wulf / to whome he sayd / paye me of that

I

I haue kepte the secrete/ ¶ And thenne the
wulf ansuered to hym in this maner/ I thanke
thyn handes and thy tongue/ and not thyn hede
ne thyn eyen/ For by them I shold haue ben
betrayed/ yf I had not fledde aweye/ ¶ And
therfore men must not trusfe in hym that hath
two faces and two tongues/ for suche folk is
lyke and semblable to the scorpion/ the whiche
enoyneth with his tongue/ and prycketh sore
with his taylle

¶ The fourth fable is of Iuno the goddesse and
of the pecok and of the nyghtyngale



Very one oughte to be content of
kynde/ and of suche good as god
hath fente vnto hym/ wherof he
must vse Iustly/ As reherceth
this fable of a pecok whiche came
to Iuno the goddesse/ and sayd to her I am
heuy and forowful/ by cause I can not syng
as wel as the nyghtyngale For euery one
mocketh and scorneth me/ by cause I can not
syng/ And Iuno would conforte hym and
sayd/ thy fayre forme and beaute is fayrer and
more worthy and of gretter preyfynge than the
songe of the nyghtyngale/ For thy fethers and
thy colour ben resplendysshyng as the precious
Emerawd And theyr is no byrde lyke to thy
fethers ne to thy beaulte/ ¶ And the pecok
sayd thenne to Iuno/ All this is nought / syth
I can not syng/ And thenne Iuno sayd ageyne
thus to the pecok for to contente hym/ This is
in the desposycion of the goddes/ whiche haue
gyuen to eyther of yow one propyrte/ and one
vertue/ suche as it pleasyd them/ As to the
they

they haue gyuen fayr fygure / to the egle haue
they gyuen strengthe / and to the nyghtyngale
fayr & playsaüt songe / And so to all other
byrdes / wherfore euery one must be content
of that that he hath For the myserable auary-
cious / the more goodes that they haue the more
they defyre to haue

¶ The b fable maketh mencion of the panthire
and of the vylayns



Very one ought to do wel to the
straunger and forgyue to the
myserable/ As reherceth this
fable of a panthere whiche fylle in
to a pytte/ And whan the vy-
laynes or chorles of the country fawe her/
somme of them beganne to smyte on her/ and
the other sayd pardonne and forgyue her/ for
she hath hurted no body/ and other were that
gaf to her breed/ And another sayd to the
vylayns/ beware ye well that ye flee her not/
And by cause that they were al of dyuerse wyll/
euerychone of them wente and retorne home
ageyne wenynge that she shold deye within the
sayd pytte/ but lytyl and lytyl she clymmed vp/
and wente to her hows ageyne/ and made her
to be wel medicyned/ in so moche/ that soone
she was al hole/ ¶ And within a whylle after
she hauynge in her memorye the grete Iniurye
that had be done to her came ageyne to the
place where she had be hurte and sore bete/ &
began to kylle & flee al the bestes whiche were
there

there about and put al the shepherds and swyne-
herds & other whiche kepte beeftes all to flyght /
she brente the Corne & many other euyl and
grete harme she dyd then aboute / And whanne
the folke of the country fawe the grete dom-
mage that she dyd to them / they came toward
her / prayenge that she wold haue pyte on them /
And to them she ansuerd in this manere / I am
not come hyther to take vengeance on them
whiche haue had pyte and myferycorde of me /
but only on them that wold haue flayne me /
And for the wycked and euyele folk I recypte this
fable / to thende that they hurte no body / For
yf alle the vylaynes hadde hadde pyte / the one
as the other of the poure panthere or serpent
whiche was straunger and myferable / as moche
as she was fallen in to the pytte / the for sayd
euylle and dommyge had not come to them

¶ The vi fable is of the bochers and of the
whethers



Hanne a lygnage or kynred is in-
dyfferent or indyuyfyon / not
lyghtly they shalle doo ony thyng
to theyr salute / as reherceth to vs
this fable / Of a bocher whiche
entryd within a stable full of whethers / And after
as the whethers sawe hym / none of them sayd
one word / And the bocher toke the fyrt that
he fonde / ¶ Thenne the whethers spake al to
gyder and sayd / lete him doo what he wylle /
And thus the bocher tooke him all one after
another sauf one onely / And as he wold haue
taken the last / the poure whether sayd to hym /
Iustly I am worthy to be take / by cause I haue
not holpen my felawes / For he that wylle not
helpe ne comforte other / ought not to demaunde
or aske helpe ne comforte / For vertue whiche is
vnyed is better than vertue separate

¶ The seveth fable is of the fawkoner and of
the byrdes



He wyse ought to kepe and obserue
the good couceyll/ And in no
wyse they ought not to doo the
contrarye/ As reherceth to vs
this fable/ Of the byrdes whiche
were Ioyeful and gladde/ as the prymtempes
came/ by cause that theyr nestes were thenne al
couerd with leues/ And Incontynent they be-
held and sawe a fawkoner whiche dressyd and
leyd laces and nettes for to take them/ ¶ And
thenne they sayd al to gyder/ Yonder man hath
pyte of vs/ For whanne he beholdeth vs he
wepeth/ ¶ And thenne the pertryche/ whiche
had experimented and assayed all the deceytes
of the sayd Fawkoner/ sayd to them/ kepe yow
alle wel fro that sayd man and flee hyghe in to
the ayer/ For he seketh nothyng/ but the
manere for to take yow/ or to the markette he
shalle bere yow for to be sold/ And they that
byleuyd his couceylle were sauued/ And they
that byleuyed it not were taken and lost/ ¶ And
therfore they whiche byleue good councylle are
delyuerd oute of theyr peryles/ And they whiche
byleue it not ben euer in grete daunger



N tyme passed men preyfyd more
the folke full of lesynges and fals-
hede than the man full of trouthe/
the whiche thynge regneth gretely
vnto this daye/ As we may see
by this present fable/ Of the man of trouthe
and of the man lyar/ whiche went to gyder
thorugh the countrey/ And so longe they wente
to gyder by theyr journeys/ that they came in
to the prouunce of the apes/ And the kynge of
thapes made them bothe to be taken and brought
before hym And he beyng in his Royal mageste/
where as he fatte lyke an Emperour/ and alle
his Apes aboute hym/ as the subgets ben aboute
theyr lord/ wold haue demaunded/ and in dede
he demaunded of the lyer/ who am I/ And the
lesyng maker and flaterer sayd to hym/ thow
arte emperour and kynge/ the fayrest creature
that is on earthe/ ¶ And after the kynge de-
maunded of hym ageyne/ who ben these whiche
ben al aboute me/ And the lyar ansuerd/ Syre
they ben thy knyghtes & your subgettes for to
kepe

kepe your persone / and your Royalme / And
thenne the kynge sayd thou arte a good man / I
wylle that thou be my grete stward of my
houishold / and that euery one bere to the honour
and reuerence / And whan the man of trouthe
herd alle this he sayd to hym self / yf this man
for to haue made lesynges is soo gretely en-
haunced / thenne by gretter rayson / I shalle
be more worshipped and enhaunced / yf I saye
trouthe / ¶ And after the kynge wold aske the
trewe man / and demaunded of hym / who am
I / and alle that ben aboute me / And thenne
the man of trouthe ansuerd thus to hym / thou
arte an ape and a beste ryght abhomynable /
And alle they whiche ben aboute the are lyke
and semblable to the / ¶ The kynge thenne
commaunded that he shold be broken and toren
with teeth and clawes and put alle in to pycees /
And therfore it happeth ofte that the lyers and
flaterers ben enhauced / and the men of trouthe
ben set alowe and put aback / For oftyme for
to saye trouthe men lese theyre lyues / the whiche
thyng is ageynst Iustyce and equyte

¶ The ix fable is of the hors / of the hunter and
of the herte /



One ought to put hym self in subiec-
tion for to auenge hym on other /
For better is not to submytte hym-
self / than after to be submytted /
As reherceth to vs this fable / Of
an hors whiche had enuye ouer an herte / by
cause the herte was fayrer than he / and the
hors by enuye went vnto an hunter / to whome
he sayd in this manere / yf thou wylt byleue
me / we shalle this day take a good proye /
Lepe vpon my bak / and take thy fwerd / and
we shalle chace the herte / and thou shalt hytte
hym with thy fwerd / and kylle hym / and
shalt take hym / and thenne his fleslhe thou
mayst ete / and his skynne thou mayst felle /

¶ And thenne the hunter moued by auaryce /
demaunded of the hors / thynkest thou by thy
feythe that we may take the herte / of whomme
thow spekest to me of / ¶ And the hors answerd
thus / Suffysse the / For ther to I shalle put al
my dylygence and alle my strengthe / lepe vpon
me / and doo after my counceytle / ¶ And
thenne

thenne the Hunter lepte forthwith vpon the
hors backe/ And the hors beganne to renne
after the herte/ And whanne the herte fawe/
hym come he fied/ And by cause that the hert
ranne faster/ than the hors did/ he scaped fro
them/ and fawed hym/ ¶ And thenne when the
hors fawe and felte hym moche wery/ and that
he myght no more renne/ he sayd to the hunter
in this manere/ alyght fro my back/ For I may
bere the no more and haue myft of my proye/
Thenne sayd the hunter to the hors/ Syth thou
arte entryd in to my handes/ yet shalt not thou
escape thus fro me/ thou haft the brydel in thy
mouthe wherby thou mayeft be kepte ftylle and
arrested/ And thou wylt lepe/ the fadell shalle
fau me/ And yf thou wylt caste thy feet fro
the/ I haue good spores for to constrayne and
make the goo whether thou wylt or not where
as I wylle haue the/ And therfore kepe the
wel/ that thou shewest not thy self rebelle vnto
me/ ¶ Therfore it is not good to put and
submytte hym self vnder the handes of other
wenyng therby to be auenged of hym/ ageynste
whome men haue enuye/ For who submytteth
hym self vnder the myght of other/ he byndeth
hym self to hym

¶ The tenth fable is of the asse and of the lyon

THe grete callers by theyr hyghe and lowd crye supposen to make folke aferd/ As recyteth this fable/ Of an asse whiche somtyme mette with a lyon / to the whiche the asse sayd / lette vs clymme vpon the montayne/ and I shalle shewe to the / how the beeftes ben aferd of me / and the lyon beganne to smyle/ and he ansuerd to the asse / Goo we my broder/ And whan they were on the top of the hylle/ the asse byganne to crye/ And the foxe and hares beganne to flee/ And whanne thasse saw them flee sayd to the lyon / Seest thou not how these beeftes dreden and doubten me / and the lyon sayde / I had ben afo ferdfull of thy voys / yf I had not knownen verly that thou arte but an asse / ¶ And therfore men nede not doubt ne dredre hym that auancest hym self for to do that that he may not doo / For god kepe the mone fro the wulues / Ne also men nede not doubt a foole for his menaces / ne for his hyghe crye

¶ The xij fable is of the hawke and of other
byrdes



He ypcrytes maken to god a berd
of strawe / As recyteth to vs this
fable / Of a hawke / whiche som-
tyme fayned / that he wold haue
celebrated and holden a natall or
a grete feste / the whiche feste shold be celebred
within a Temple / And to this feste and solemp-
nyte he Inuyted and somoned alle the smal
byrdes / to the whiche they came / And Inkon-
tynent as they were all come in to the temple /
the hauk shette the gate and put them alle to
dethe / one after an other / ¶ And therfore this
fable sheweth to vs / how we must kepe our self
fro all them / whiche vnder fayre semynge haue
a fals herte / and that ben ypcrytes and decep-
tors of god and of the world /

¶ The xij fable is of the fore / and of the Lyon



Ayre doctryne taketh he in hym
self / that chastyfeth hym by the
perylle of other / As to vs re-
herceth this present fable / Of a
lyon whiche somtyme faygned
hym self seke / ¶ And whanne the beeftes
knewe that the lyon was seke / they wold goo
alle to vysyte and see hym as theyr kyng /
¶ And Incontynent as the beeftes entryd in to
his hows for to see and conforte hym / he de-
uoured and ete them / ¶ And whan the foxes
were come to the yate for to haue vysyded the
lyon / they knewe wel the fallace and falphede
of the lyon and falewed hym at the entre of the
yate / And entryd not within / ¶ And whan
the lyon sawe that they wold not entre in to his
hows / he demaūded of them / why they wold
not come within / And one of the foxes sayd to
hym / we knowe wel by thy traces / that alle
the beeftes whiche haue entryd in to thy hows
came not oute ageyne / And also yf we entryd
within / nomore shold we come ageyne ¶ And
therfor he is wel happy that taketh ensample
by

by the dommage of other / ¶ For to entre
in to the hows of a grete lord / it is wel facyle /
but for to come oute of hit ageyne it is moche
dyffycyle /

¶ The xiij fable is of the asse / and of the wulf



O none eyylle man seythe ne trouthe
ought neuer to be adiousted /
As men may wel see by this
fable / Of a wulf whiche vysyted
an asse whiche was wel feke the
whiche wulf beganne to fele and taste hym / and
demaunded of hym / My broder and my frend
where abouthe is thy sore / And the asse sayd to
hym / there as thou tastest ¶ And thenne the
wulf faynyng to vysyte hym / beganne to byte
and smyte hym / ¶ And therfore men must not
trust flaterers / For one thynge they faye / and
done another

¶ The xiij fable is of the hedgehogge and of the
lytyl kyddes



T behodeth not to the yong and
lytyl of age to mocke ne scorne
theyr older / As this fable sayth /
of thre lytyl hedgehogges / whiche
mocked a grete hedgehogge /
whiche fled before a wulf / And whanne he
perceyued the scornyng of them / he sayd to
them / Ha a poure fooles & wood ye wote not
wherfore I fle / For yf ye wyft and knewe wel
thyn conuenyent and paryll / ye shold not mocke
of hit / And therfore whan men seen that the
grete and myghty ben ferdful and doubtous /
the lasse or lytyll oughen not to be assured / For
whan the toune is taken and gotten by fortune
of warre the Country aboute is not therfore
more acertayned / but ouȝt to tremble and shake

¶ The xv fable is of the man and of the lyon /

MEn ought not to byleue the paynture /
but the trouthe and the dede /
As men may see by this present
Fable / Of a man & of a lyon
whiche had sryf to gyder & were
in grete discension for to wete and knowe /
whiche of them bothe was more stronger /
¶ The man sayd that he was stronger than the
lyon / And for to haue his fayenge veryfyed /
he shewed to the lyon a pyctour / where as a
man had vyctory ouer a lyon / As the pyctour of
Sampson the stronge ¶ Thenne sayd the lyon
to the man / yf the lyon coude make pyctour
good and trewe / hit had be herin paynted /
how the lyon had had vyctorye of the man /
but now I shalle shewe to the very and trewe
wytnesse therof / The lyon thenne ledde the
man to a grete pytte / And there they fought
to gyder / But the lyon caste the man into the
pytte / and submytted hym in to his subiection
and sayd / Thow man / now knowest thou alle
the trouthe / whiche of vs bothe is stronger /
¶ And therfore at the werke is knownen the best
and most subtile werker /

¶ The xvij fable is of the camel / and of the flee



E that hath no myght ought not to
gloryfye ne preyse hym self of no-
thyng / As reherceth to vs this
presente fable of a camell / whiche
bare a grete charge or burden

It happed that a flee by cause of the camels
here lept to the back of the camel / and made
her to be borne of hym all the day And whanne
they had made a grete way / And that the
camel came at euen to the lodgys / and was put
in the stable / the flee lept fro hym to the
grounde besyde the foote of the camel / And
after sayd to the camel / I haue pyte of the /
and am comen doune fro thy back by cause that
I wylle nomore greue ne trauaylle the by the
berynge of me / And the camel sayd to the
flee / I thanke thee / how be it that I am not
sore laden of the / And therfore of hym which
may neyther helpe ne lette men nede not make
grete estymacion of

¶ The xviij fable is of the Ant and of the sygale



T is good to purueye hym self in the somer season of suche thynges / wheroft he shalle myster and haue nede in wynter season / As thow mayft fee by this prefent fable / Of the sygalle / whiche in the wynter tyme went and demaunded of the ant somme of her Corne for to ete / ¶ And thenne the ant sayd to the sygall / what haft thou done al the somer last passed / And the sygalle ansuerd / I haue songe / ¶ And after sayd the ante to her / Of my corne shalld not thou none haue / And yf thou haft songe alle the somer / danfe now in wynter / ¶ And therfore there is one tyme for to doo some labour and werk / And one tyme for to haue rest / For he that werketh not ne doth no good / shal haue ofte at his teeth grete cold and lacke at his nede /

¶ The wisiſ ſable is of the pylgrym and of the ſwerd



n euylle man maye be cauſe of the perdycion or losſe of many folke /
As reherceth to vs this preſent Fable / Of a pylgrym / whiche
fond in hiſ way a ſwerd ¶ And
aſked of the ſwerd / what is he that hath loſt the / ¶ And the ſwerd anſwerd to the pylgrym /
A man alone hath loſt me / but many one I haue loſt / And therfor an euyl man may wel
be loſt / but er he be loſt he may wel lette many one / For by cauſe of an euylle man may come
in a Countrey many euyls

¶ The xix fable is of the sheep and of the Crowe

Men ought not to iniurye ne def-
prayfe the poure Innocentes ne
the symple folke. As reherceth
this fable/ Of a Crowe/ whiche
sette her self vpon the back of a
sheep/ And whan the sheep had born her a
grete whyle she sayd to her/ thow shalt kepe
thy self wel to sette vpon a dogge/ ¶ And
thenne the crowe sayd to the sheep/ Thynke
thow poure Innocent that I wote wel with
whome I playe/ For I am old and malycious/
and my kynde is to lette all Innocents/ and to
be frende vnto the euyls/ ¶ A[n]d therfore this
fable wylle telle and faye/ how ther be folke
of suche kynde/ that they wyl doo no good
werk/ but only to lette euer the Innocents and
symple folke

¶ The xx fable maketh mencion of the tree and
of the reed /



One ought to be proud ageynst his lord / but oughte to humble hym self toward hym / As this fable reherceth to vs of a grete tre / whiche wold neuer bowe hym for none wynd / And a reed whiche was at his foote bowed hym self as moche as the wynd wold / And the tree sayd to hym / why doſt thou not abyde fystle as I doo / And the reed ansuerd / I haue not the myght whiche thou haſt / And the tree sayd to the reed proudly / than haue I more strengthe / than thou / And anone after came a grete wynde / whiche threwe doun to the ground the sayd grete tree / and the reed abode in his owne beynge / For the proudē shall be allway humbled And the meke and hūble shalle be enhaunced / For the roote of alle vertue is obedynce and humylyte

¶ Here syngesheth the fourthe book of the sub-
ſtyle fables of Esop / And how he it that
mor

more of them ben not found in ony Reg-
ystre / Neuertheles many other fables com-
posed by hym / haue ben founden whiche
here after folowen

¶ The fyreste fable maketh mencion of the mulet /
of the foxe / and of the wulf



En Calle many folke Asses / that
ben wel subtyll / And suche
wenen to knowe moche / and to
be a grete clerke that is but an
asse / As hit appiereth by thys
fable / Of a mule whiche ete grasse in a medowe
nyghe to a grete forest / to whome came a foxe
whiche demaunded of hym / What arte thou /
And the mule ansuerd I am a beefe / And the
foxe sayd to hym / I ne demaunde ne aske of
the that / but I aske who was thy fader / ¶ And
the mule ansuerd / my grete fader was a hors /
And the foxe sayd ageyne I ne demaunde to the
that / but only that thou tellest me / who thou
arte named / And the mule sayd to the foxe /
I ne wote / by cause I was lytyll whanne my
fader deyde / Neuertheles to thende that my
name shold not be forgotten / my fader made hit
to be wretton vnder my lyfte foote behynde /
wherfore uf thou wylt knowe my name / goo
thow and loke vnder my foote / ¶ And whanne
the foxe vnderstood the fallace or falphede / he
wente

wente ageyne into the forest / And met with
the wulf/ to whome he sayd/ Ha myschaunt
beest/ what doft thou here/ Come with me
and in to thy hand I shall put a good proy
Loke in to yonder medowe/ there shalt thou
fynde a fatte beest Of the whiche thou mayst
be fylded/ ¶ And thenne the wulf entryd in
to the medowe/ and fonde there the mule/
Of whom he demaunnded/ who arte thou/
And the mule ansuerd to the wulf/ I am
a beest/ And the wulf sayd to hym/ This
is not that that I aske to the/ but telle how
thou arte named/ And the mule sayd I wote
not/ but neuertheless yf thou wylt knowe my
name/ thou shalt fynde it wretton at my lyfte
foote behynde/ Thenne sayd the wulf/ I praye
the/ vouche sauf to shewe it to me/ And the
mule lyft up his foote/ ¶ And as the wulf
beheld and studyed in the foote of the mule/ the
Mule gaf hym suche a stroke whith his foote
before his forhede/ that almost the brayne ranne
oute of his hede/ And the foxe whiche was
within a bussh and fawe alle the maner beganne
to lawhe and mocque the wulf/ to whomme
he sayd/ Foole beeste thou wort wel/ that
thou canst not rede/ wherfore yf euylle is therof
come to the/ thy self is cause of hit/ For none
ought not to entremete hym to doo that/ that
Impoffyble is to hym /

¶ The second fable is of the bore and of the wulf



Vche desyren to be grete lordes /
and dyspreysen his parents / that
at the last becomen pōure and
fallen in to grete dishonour / As
thow mayst see by this present
fable / Of a bore / whiche was amonge a grete
herd of other swynes / And for to haue lordship
and domynacion ouer alle them / he beganne to
make grete rumour / and shewed his grete teethe
for to make the other swynes aferd / but by
cause they knewe hym / they sette naught by
hym / wherof he displeased moche / and wold
goo in to a herd of sheep / and emonge lambes /
And whanne he was amonge the lambes / he
began to make grete rumour / and shewed his
sharp and long teeth ¶ And whanne the lambes
herd hym / they were sore aferd / and begganne
to shake for fere / ¶ And thenne sayd the bore
within hym self / here is the place wherin I
must abyde and duell For here I shalle be
gretely worshipped / For euerychone quaken
for fere of me / ¶ Thenne came the wulf there
for to haue and rauyſſe somme proye / And
the

the lambes beganne alle to flee/ but the bore
as proud wold not stree hym/ ne go fro the
place/ by cause he supposeth to be lord/ but the
wulf toke hym/ and bare hym in to the wode
for to ete hym/ ¶ And as the wulf bare hym/
it happed that he passed before the herd of
swynes/ whiche the bore had lefte/ ¶ And
thenne whanne the bore perceyued and knewe
them/ he prayd and cryed to them/ that for the
loue of god they wold helpe hym/ And that
withouthe her help/ he was deed/ And thenne
the swynes alle of one assent and owne wylle
wente and recouered theyr felewe/ and after
flewe the wulf/ And as the bore was delyuerd/
and fawe hym amonge the swynes/ and that alle
his doubte and fere was gone/ he beganne to
haue vergoyne and shame/ by cause that he was
thus departed/ and gone fro theyr felaufship and
sayd to them/ My bretheren and my frendes/ I
am well worthy to haue had this payne/ by
cause/ I was gone & departed from yow/ And
therfore he that is wel/ lete hym beware that
he moue not hym self/ For suche by his pryde
desyreteth to be a grete lord/ whiche ofte falleth
in grete pouerte/

¶ The thyrd fable is of the foxe and of the cocke /



Ftyme moche talkynge letteth / As hit appiereth by this fable / Of a foxe / whiche came toward a Cocke / And sayd to hym / I wold fayne wete / yf thou canst as wel syng as thy fader dyde / And thenne the Cock shette his eyen / and beganne to crye and fynge / ¶ And thenne the Foxe toke and bare hym awey / And the peple of the towne cryed / the foxe bereth awey the cok / ¶ And thenne the Cocke sayd thus to the Foxe / My lord vnderstandest thou not / what the peple sayth / that thou bereft awey theyr cock / telle to them / that it is thyn / and not theyrs / And as the foxe sayd / hit is not yours / but it is myn / the cok scaped fro the foxe mouthe / and flough vpon a tree / And thenne the Cok sayd to the fox thou lyeſt / For I am theyrs and not thyn / And thenne the foxe beganne to hytte erthe bothe with his mouthe & heed fayenge / mouthe / thou haſt ſpoken to moche / thou ſholdest haue eten the Cok / had not be thyn ouer

ouer many wordes/ And therfor ouer moche
talkyng letteth/ and to moche crowynge smart-
eth/ therfore kepe thy self fro ouer many
wordes/ to thende/ that thow repenteft the
not

¶ The fourthe fable is of the dragon and of the
herete



En ought not to rendre euylle for
good/ And them that helpen
ought not to be letted/ As re-
herceth thys fable Of a dragon
whiche was within a Ryuer/ and
as this Ryuer was dymynuysshed of water/ the
dragon abode at the Ryuage/ whiche was al
drye/ And thus for lack of watre he coude
not stete hym/ A labourer or vylayne came
thene that waye/ and demaunded of the dragon/
what doft thou there/ And the dragon ansuerd
to hym/ I am here lefte withoute water/ with-
oute whiche I can not meue/ but yf thou wilt
bynd me/ and sette me vpon thyn asse/ and
lede me in to my Ryuer/ I shal gyue to the
habondaunce of gold and syluer/ And the
vylayne or chorle for courtyse bound and ledde
hym in to his repaire/ And whanne he had
vnbounden hym/ he demaunded his fallary/
and payment/ And the dragon sayd to hym/
By cause that thou hast bounden me/ thou
wylt

wylt be payd And by caufe that I am now
hongry/ I shalle ete the/ and the vylayne
ansuerd and sayd/ For to haue done wel/ thow
wylt ete and deuoure me/ And as they ftryued
to gyder/ the foxe whiche was within the forest
herd wel theyr question and different came to
them/ and sayd in this manere/ Stryue ye no
more to gyder/ For I wyl acord/ and make
pees bytwixt you Late eche of yow telle to me
his reason for to wete/ whiche of yow hath
ryght/ And whanne eche of them had told
his caas the foxe sayd to the vylayne/ Shewe
thow to me/ how thow boundest the dragon/ to
thende/ that I may gyue therof a trewe and
lawfull sentence/ And the vylayne put the
dragon vpon his asse/ and bound hym as he
had done before/ And the fox demaunded of
the dragon/ helde he thenne the so fast bounden/
as he dothe now/ And the dragon ansuerd/ ye
my lord/ and yet more hard/ And the foxe
sayd to the vylayn/ Bynde hym yet more
harder/ For who that wel byndeth/ well can
he vnbynd And whanne the dragon was fast
and wel bounden/ the fox sayd to the vylayne/
bere hym ageyne there as thow fyrst tokest hym/
And there thow shalt leue hym bounden as he
is now/ And thus he shalle not ete ne deuoure
the/ For he that dothe euylle/ euylle he must
haue/

haue/ For Justly he shall ben punysshed of
god/ they that done harme and dommage to
the poure folke For who so euer rendreth
euylle for good/ he shalle therof iustly be re-
warded

¶ The v fable is of the foxe and of the catte /



Here is many folke / whiche auauncen them and saye that they ben wyse and subtyle / whiche ben grete fooles and knowynge no thyng / As this fable reherceth
 Of a foxe whiche som tyme mette with a Catte / to whome he sayd / My godsep / god geue yow good daye / And the catte answerd / my lord god gyue yow good lyf / And thenne the foxe demaunded of hym / My godsep what canst thou doo / And the catte sayd to hym / I can lepe a lytyl / And the fox sayd to hym / Certaynly thou art not worthy to lyue / by cause that thou canst nought doo / And by cause that the cat was angry of foxes wordes / he asked and demaunded of the foxe / And thou godsep what canst thou doo / A thousand wyles haue I sayd the foxe / For I haue a sak ful of scyences and wyles / And I am so grete a clerke / that none maye begyle ne deceyue me / And as they were thus spekyng to gyder the cat perceyued a knyght comyng toward them / whiche had many dogges with hym / and sayd to the foxe / My godsep / certaynly

certaynly I see a knyght comynge hyther ward /
whiche ledeth with hym many dogges / the
whiche as ye wel knowe ben our enemyes / The
foxe thenne ansuerd to the cat / My godsep /
thou spekeft lyke a coward / and as he that is
aferd / lete them come and care not thow / And
Incontynently as the dogges perceyued and sawe
the foxe and the catte / they beganne to renne
vpon them / And whanne the foxe sawe them
come / he sayd to the kat / Flee we my broder /
flee we / To whome the kat ansuerd / Certaynly
godsep / therof is none nede / neuer the les the
foxe bylued not the cat / but fledde / and ranne
as fast as he myght for to saue hym / And the
catte lepte vpon a tree and sauued hym self /
sayenge / Now shalle we see / who shalle playe
best for to preferue and saue hym self / And
whanne the catte was vpon a tree / he loked
aboute hym / and sawe how the dogges held the
foxe with theyr teethe / to whome he cryed and
seyd / O godsep and subtyle foxe / of thy thow-
sand wyles that syth late thow coudest doo / lete
me now see / and shewe to me one of them /
the foxe ansuerd not / but was killed of the
dogges fend the catte was sauued / ¶ And ther-
fore the wyse ought not to desprayse the symple /
For suche supposeth to be moche wyse whiche
is a kynd and a very foole /

¶ The viij fable is of the hegoote and of the wulf



He feble ought not to arme hym
 ageynst the stronge / As recyteth
 this present fable of a wulf / whiche
 some tyme ranne after a hegoote /
 and the hegoote for to faue hym
 lept vpon a rocke / and the wulf besyeged hym /
 ¶ And after whan they had duelled there two
 or thre dayes / the wulf beganne to wexe hongry /
 and the hegoote to haue thurst / And thus the
 wulf went for to ete / and the hegoote went for
 to

to drynke / And as the hegoot dranke he sawe
his shadewe in the water / and speculynge and
beholdynge his shadowe profered and sayd suche
wordes within hym self / Thou haft so fayre
legges / so fayr a berd / and so fayre hornes / and
haft fere of the wulf / yf hit happed that he
come ageyne / I shalle corryge hym wel / and
shalle kepe hym wel / that he shalle haue no
myght ouer me / ¶ And the wulf whiche held
hys peas / and herkened what he sayd / toke hym
by the one legge thus sayenge / what wordes ben
these whiche thou profereſt & sayſt brorder He-
goote / ¶ And whanne the hegote sawe that
he was taken / he beganne to faye to the wulf /
Ha my lord / I faye no thynge / and haue pyte
of me / I knowe wel / that it is my couple / And
the wulf toke hym by the neck and strangled
hym / ¶ And therfore it is grete folye whan
the feble maketh werre ageynſt the puyſſant and
ſtronge.

¶ The viij fable is of the wulf and of the asse



En ought not to byleue lyghtly the
cunceytle of hym to whome men
purposen to lette/ As ye maye
see by this fable/ Of a wulf
whiche somtyme mette with an
Asse/ to the whiche he sayd/ My broder I am
hongry/ wherfor I must nedes ete the/ ¶ And
thenne the Asse ansuerd ryght benyngly/ My
lord/ with me thou mayst doo what someuer
thow wylt/ For yf thow etest me/ thow shalt
putte me oute of grete Payne/ But I prey the
yf thow wylt ete me/ that thou vouchesauf to
ete me oute of the way/ For wel thow knowest
that I brynge home the rayfyns fro the vyne/
and fro the feldes home the corne/ ¶ Also wel
thow knowest/ that I bere home wood fro the
forest/ And whanne my maister wel do buyld
somme edyffye/ I must go fetche the stones
from the montayne/ And at the other parte I
bere the corne vnto the mylle/ And after I bere
home the floure/ And for alle short conclusiuns
I was borne in a curfyd houre/ For to alle Payne
and to alle grete labours I am submytted & sub-
get

get to hit / For the whiche I wylle not that
thow ete me here in the waye for the grete ver-
goyne and shame that therof myght come to
me / But I pray the / and Instantly requyre the /
that thow wylt here my counceylyle / whiche is /
that we two go in to the forest / and thow shalt
bynde me by thy breste / as thy seruant / And
I shalle bynd the by thy neck as my mayster
And thow shalt lede me before the in to the
wood where someuer thow wylt / to the ende
that more secretlye thow ete me / to the whiche
counceylyle the wulf acorded and sayd / I wylle
wel that it be donne so / ¶ And whanne they
were come in to the forest / they bounde eche
other in the maner as aboue is sayd / ¶ And
whanne they were wel bounden / the wulf sayd
to the Asse / goo we where thow wylt / and goo
before for to shewe the waye / And the asse
wente before and ledde the wulf in to the ryght
waye of his maysters hows / ¶ And whanne the
wulf beganne to knowe the way / he sayd to the
asse / we goo not the ryght way / to the whiche
the asse ansuerd / ¶ My lord faye not that /
For certaynly / this is the ryght wey / But for
alle that / the wulf wold haue gone backward /
But neuertheles the asse ledde hym vnto the
hows of his mayster / ¶ And as his mayster and
alle his meynys fawe how the Asse drewe the
wulf

wulf after hym / and wold haue entred in to the
hows they came oute with staues and clubbes
and smote on the wulf / ¶ And as one of them
wold haue caste and smyten a grete stroke vpon
the wulves heede / he brake the cord / wherwith
he was bounden / And so scaped and ranne avey
vpon the montayne sore hurted and beten / And
thenne the ase for the grete ioye he hadde of
that he was so scaped fro the wulf / beganne to
fynge / And the wulf whiche was vpon the
montayne / & herd the voys of thasse beganne to
faye in hym self / thow mayst wel cry and calle /
For I shalle kepe the wel another tyme / that
thow shalt not bynd me as thow haft done / but
late gone / ¶ And therfore hit is grete folye to
byleue the counceytle of hym / to whome men
will lette / And to putte hym self in his sub-
iection / And he that ones hath begyled / must
kepe hym fro another tyme that he be not de-
ceyued / For he to whome men purposen to
doo somme euylle tourn / syth men holden
hym at auantage / men muste putte him self at
the vpper syde of hym / And after men shall
purueye for their counceytle

¶ The vij fable is of the serpent and of the
labourer /



HE Auctor of this booke reherceth
suche another Fable and of suche
sentence / as the precydent / that
is to wete / that men shold not
byleue hym / to whome / men
hath done eylle / And sayth that somtyme in
heruest tyme a labourer wente for to see his
goodes in the feldes / the whiche mette on his
way a serpent / And with a staf whiche he bare
in his hand smote the sayd serpent / and gaf hym
sufe a stroke vpon the heed / that nyghe he
flew hym / ¶ And as the serpent felte hym
self so sore hurted / he wente fro the man / and
entryd in to his hole / And sayd to the labourer /
O euylle Frende / thou hast bete me / But I
warne the / that thou never byleue not hym /
to the whiche thou hast done ony eylle / Of
the whiche wordes the labourer made lytyl ex-
tyme and went forthe on his waye /

¶ It befelle thenne in the same yere / that
this labourer wente ageyne by that waye / for
to goo laboure and ere his ground / To whome
the

the sayd Serpent sayd / ¶ Ha my frend / whyther
goost thou / And the labourer answerd to hym /
I goo ere and plowe my ground / And the Ser-
pent sayd to hym / fowe not to moche / For
this yere shalle be raynfull and grete habond-
aunce of waters shalle falle / But byleue not to
hym / to whome thou haft somtyme done ony
euylle / And withoute ony wordes the labourer
wente forthe on his waye / and byleued not the
serpent / but made alle his ground to be cultyued
and ered / and sowed as moche corne as he
myghte / In that same yere felle grete habond-
aunce of water / wherfore the sayd labourer had
but lytyl of his corne / For the mooste parte of
the corne that he had sownen perysshed that same
yere by cause of the grete rayne that felle that
same yere / ¶ And the next yere after folow-
ynge / as this labourer passyd before the repaire
or dwellynge place of the sayd Serpent and
went for to sowe his ground / the Serpent de-
maunded thenne of hym / My Frend whyther
goost thou / ¶ And the labourer answerd / I
goo for to sowe my ground wyth corn and With
other g[r]aynes suche as I hope that shalle ben
necessary for me in tyme comynge / And thēne
the Serpent faide to hym / My frend sowe but
lytyl corne / For the Somer next comynge shalle
be soo grete and soo hote / that by the dryenes and
hete /

hete / that alle the goodes sownen on the erthe
 shall perysſhe But byleue not hym / to whome
 thou hast done ony euylle / ¶ And withoute
 fayenge ony word / the labourer wente / and
 thought on the wordes of the Serpent / ¶ And
 wenynge / that the Serpent hadde soo sayd for
 to deceyue hym / he sowed as moche corne and
 other graynes / as he myght / ¶ And it happed
 that the Somer next folowynge was suche / as
 aboue is sayd / Therfor the man was begyled /
 ¶ For he gadred that same yere nothynge /
 ¶ And the next yere after folowynge / the sayd
 feasoun as the poure labourer wente ageyne for
 to ere and cultyue his ground the serpent sawe
 hym come fro ferre / ¶ And as he came and
 passed before his repaire he asked of the labourer
 in suche maner / ¶ My friend whyther goost
 thou / And the labourer ansuered / I goo cultyue
 and ere my ground / ¶ And thenne the serpent
 feyd to hym / My Frend sowe not to moche ne
 to lytyl of corne and of other graynes / but sowe
 bytwene bothe / Neuertheles byleue not hym /
 to the whiche thou haſt done euyl ¶ And I
 telle the that this yere ſhalle be the moſt tem-
 perate and the moſt fertyle of alle maner of
 corne / that euer thou ſawefſt / And whanne the
 labourer hadde herd theſe wordes / he wente
 his waye / and dyd as the Serpent had ſayd /
 And

And that yere he gadred moche good / by cause of
the good disposicion of the season and tyme /
¶ And on a daye of the same yere / the serpent
fawe the sayd labourer comynge fro the heruest /
to whome he came ageynste / And sayd / Now
saye me my good Frend / Hast thou not fond
now grete plente of goodes / as I had told to
the byfore And the labourer ansuerd and sayd
ye certaynly / wherof I thanke the / ¶ And
thenne the Serpent demaunded of hym Remu-
neracion or reward / ¶ And the labourer
thenne demaunded what he wold haue of hym /
And the Serpent sayd I ne demaunde of the
nothyng / but only that to morowe on the
mornynge thou wylt sende me a dysfh ful of mylk
by som of thy children / ¶ And thenne the
serpent shewed to the labourer the hole of his
dwellyng / & sayd to hym / telle thy sone
that he bryng the mylke hyther / but take
good heede to that that other whyle I told to
the / that thou byleuest not hym / to whome
thou haft done euylle / ¶ And anone after
whanne these thynges were sayd / the labourer
wente homeward / and in the morninge next
folowynge / he betoke to his sone a dysfhe full
of mylke / whiche he brought to the serpent /
and sette the dysfhe before the hool / And
anone the serpent came oute and flewe the
child

child through his venym / and when the labourer
 cam fro the feld / and that he came before the
 repayre or dwellinge of the serpent / he fond his
 sonne whiche laye doune deed on the erthe /
 Thenne beganne the sayd labourer to crye with
 a hyghe voys / as he that was ful of sorowe and
 of heuynesse sayinge suche wordes / Ha cursed
 & euylle serpent / vermyn and fals traytour /
 thow hast deceyued me / Ha wycked and de-
 ceytfull beest / ful of all contagyous euyll thow
 hast sorowfully slayne my sone /

¶ And thenne the serpente sayd to hym / I
 wylle well / that thow knowe / that I haue not
 slayne hym sorowfully / ne withoute cause / but
 for to auenge me of that / that thow hurtest me
 on that other daye withoute cause / and haft not
 amended hit / Haft thow now memorye / how
 ofte I sayd to the / that thow sholdest not byleue
 hym / to whome thow haft done eyyll / haue
 now thenne in thy memorye / that I am auengyd
 of the /

¶ And thus this fable sheweth how men ought
 not to byleue ne bere feythe to them / to whome
 men hath done somme harme or euylle.

¶ The ix fable is of the fare / of the wulf / and
of the lyon /



F hit be sooo that ony hath ben
adommaged by other he ought
not to take vengeaūce by the
tong in gyuyng Iniuryous wordes /
and the cause why / is by cause /
that suche vengeaunce is dishonest. As to us re-
herceth this present fable / Somtyme was a foxe /
that ete fyſſhe in a Ryuer / ¶ It happed / that
the wulf came that waye / ¶ And whanne he
ſawe the foxe / whiche ete with ſo grete appe-
tite / He beganne to faye / My broder gyue me
ſomme fyſſhe / And the foxe anſuerd to hym /
Allas my lord / It behouveth not that ye ete the
releef of my table / but for the worship of your
perſone I ſhall counceytle yow wel / Doo ſoo
moche to gete yow a basket / And I ſhall teche
yow how men ſhall take fyſſhes / to thende /
that ye may take ſomme whan ye ſhall be
hongry / And the wulf wente in to the ſtreete /
and ſtalle a basket / whiche he brought with
hym / the foxe tooke the basket / and bound
it with a cord at the wulfs taylle / ¶ And
whanne

whanne he was wel bounden/ the foxe sayd
to the wulf/ goo thow by the Ryuer/ and I
shalle lede and take hede to the basket/ And
the wulf dyde as the foxe had hym do/ ¶ And
as the wulf was goynge within the water/ the
foxe fylled the basket fulle of stones by his
malyce/ ¶ And whan the basket was full/
the foxe sayd to the wulf/ Certaynly my lord/
I maye no more lyfte ne hold the basket/ so full
it is of fyfthe/ ¶ And the wulf wenynge that
the foxe had sayd truthe/ profered such wordes/
sayenge/ I render graces and thankes to god/
that I maye ones see thyn hyghe and excellente
wyfedome in the arte and crafte of fyfhyngne/
¶ And thenne the foxe sayd to hym/ My lord
abyde me here/ And I shalle fetche some to
helpe vs for to haue and take the fyfthe oute
of the basket/ And in sayenge these wordes/
the foxe ranne in to the strete/ where he fond
men/ to whome he sayd in this manere/ My
lordes what doo ye here/ why are yow werk-
leſſ/ fee yonder the wulf/ which ete your sheep/
your lambes/ and your beeftes/ and yet now he
taketh your fyfthes oute of the Ryuer/ and
ete them/ ¶ And thenne alle the men came to
gyder/ somme with flynges/ and somme with
bowes/ and other with staves vnto the Ryuer/
where they fond the wulf/ whiche they bete
outragyoufly

outragyousfly / ¶ And whan he the poure wulf
sawe hym thus oppressed / & vexed with strokis
beganne with alle his strengthe & myghte to
drawe / and supposed to haue caried the fyshe
awey / but so strongly he drewe / that he drewe
and pulled his taylle fro his ers / and thus he
scaped vnneth with his lyf / ¶ In the mene-
whyle thenne happed / that the lyon whiche was
kynge ouer alle beeftes felle in a grete sekenesse /
for the whiche cause euery beeft wente for to see
hym / as theyr lord / ¶ And when the wulf
would haue gone thyder/ he salewed his lord /
saying thus to hym / My kynge I salewe yow /
please it you to knowe that I haue gone round
aboute the countre and prouynce / and in alle
places of hit for to serche somme medycynes
prouffitable for yow / and to recowere your
helthe / but nothyng I haue found good for
your sekenesse / but only the skynne of a foxe
fyers and prowde and malycious / whiche is
youre body medycynal / but he dayneth not to
come hyther to see you But ye shalle calle
hym to a cunceylle / and whanne ye hold
hym / lete his skynne be taken from hym /
And thenne lete hym renne where he wylle /
and that fayr skynne which is so holsome / ye
shalle make hit to be sette and bound vpon
your bely / And within fewe dayes after hit
shalle

shalle rendre yow in as good helthe / as euer ye
were / ¶ And whanne he had sayd these wordes /
he departed fro the lyon and toke his leue / but
neuer he had supposed / that the foxe had
herd hym / but he had / For he was within
a terryer nyghe to the lodgys of the lyon /
where he herd alle the propofycion of the
wulf / to the whiche he dyd put remedye and
grete prouyfyon / For as foone as the wulf was
departed fro the lyon / the foxe wente in to the
feldes / And in a hyghe way he fond a grete
donghyll / within the whiche he put hym self /
¶ And as he supposed after his aduys to be de-
fowled and dagged ynough / came thus arayed
in to the pytte of the lyon / the whiche he
falewed as he oughte to haue done to his lord /
fayenge to hym in this manere / Syre kynge god
yeue good helthe / And the lyon ansuerd to hym
God salewe the swete frend / come nyghe me
and kyffe me / & after I shalle telle to the somme
secrete / whiche I wylle not that euery man
knowe / to whome the foxe sayd in this maner
Ha a fyre kynge be not displeasyd / for I am to
fowle arayed and al to dagged / by cause of the
grete way / whiche I haue gone / sekyng al
aboute somme good medycyne for you / wher-
fore it behoueth not me / for to be so nyghe your
perfone For the stenche of the donge myght
wel

wel greue you for the grete sekenesse that ye
haue / but dere fyre / yf hit please to the or euer
I come nerer to your Royal mageste I shalle goo
bathe me and make me fayre and clene / And
thenne I shall come ageyne to presente my self
byfore thy noble persone / And notwithstanding
ynge al this / also er I goo / please the to wete
& knowe that I come from alle the contrees here
aboute / and from alle the Royalmes adiacent
to this prouynce/ for to see yf I coudefynedefomme
good medycyn dusynge and nedeful to thy fike-
nesse / and for to recouere thy helthe / but cer-
tainly I haue foūd no better couceylle than the
couceylle of an aūcyent greke with a grete &
long berd / a man of grete wysdom / sage &
worthy to be praysed / the whiche sayd to me /
how in this prouynce is a wulf withoute taylle /
the whiche hath lost his taylle by the vertue of
the grete medycyn whiche is within hym / For
the whiche thyng it is nedeful and expedient /
that ye doo make this wulf to come to yow for
the recoueraunce of the helthe of your fayr and
noble body / And whan he is come dysfymulle
and calle hym to counceylle / sayenge that it
shalle be for his grete worship & proffite / & as
he shal be nyghe vnto yow cast on hym your
armed feet / and as swetely as ye maye pulle the
skynne fro the body of hym & kepe it hoole /
fauf

sauf only that ye shalle leue the heed and the
feet / And thenne lete hym gone his way to seche
his aventure / And forthwith whan ye shalle
haue that skynne / al hot and warme ye shal do
bynd hit al aboute your bely / And after that or
lytyll tyme be passed / your helthe shalle be
restored to yow / and ye shal be as hole as euer
in your lyf ye were / ¶ And thenne the foxe
toke his leue of the kynge / and departed / and
wente ageyne in to his terryer / ¶ Soone after
came then the wulf for to see the lyon / And
Incontynent the lyon called hym to cunceylle /
and castynge softly his feet vpon hym dyspoylled
the wulf of his skynne sauf the skynne of his hede
and of his feet / And after the lyon bound it al
warme about his bely / ¶ And the wulf ranne
aweye skynles / wherfore he had ynough to doo
to defende and put from hym the flyes / whiche
greued hym sore / And for the grete destresse
that he felte by cause of the flyes / that thus ete
his fleshe / he as wood beganne to renne / and
pasfyd vnder an hylle / vpon the whiche the foxe
was / ¶ And after whanne the foxe sawe hym /
he beganne to crye / and calle / lawhyng after
the wulf / and mocked / and sayd to hym / who
arte thou that passest there before with fuche a
fayre hood on thy heed and with ryght fayr
glouues in thyn handes / Herke herke / what I
shalle

shalle faye to the / whan thou wente & camest
by the kynges hows / thou werst blessed of the
lord / & whan thou were at the Court thou her-
keneft and also fayest many good wordes and
good talkynge of al the world /

¶ And therfore my godsep be it euyl or good /
thow muste al lete paffe / and goo / and haue
pacyence in thyn aduerfyte /

¶ And thus this fable sheweth vnto vs / that yf
ony be hurted or dommaged / by somme other
he must not auenge hym self by his tonge for
to make ony treson / ne for to say of other ony
harme ne open blasphemye / For he ought to
confydere / that who so euer maketh the pytte
redy for his broder / ofte it happeth that he hym
self falleth in the same / and is beten with the
same rodde that he maketh for other

¶ The x fable is of the wulf whiche made a fart



T is folye to wene more / than men
 ought to doo / For what someuer a
 foole thynketh · hit semeth to hym
 that hit shalle be / As it appiereth
 by this fable / of a wulf / whiche
 somtyme rose erly in a mornynge / And after
 that he was rySEN vp fro his bedde / as he retched
 hym self / made a grete fart / and beganne to saye
 to hym self/ blessed be god therfore / these ben
 good tydyngeS / this daye / I shalle be wel for-
 tunate and happy / as myn ers syngeth to me /
 And thenne he departed from his lodgys / and
 beganne to walke and goo / & as he wente on his
 way he fonde a sak ful of talowe / whiche a
 woman had lete falle / and with his foote he
 torned hit vspo doune / and sayd to hym / I shalle
 not ete the / For thou sholdest hurte my tendre
 stomak / and more is / I shall this day haue better
 mete / and more delycious / For well I knowe
 this by myn ers / whiche dyd syng it to me /
 And sayenge these wordes went his way / And
 anone

anone after he fond a grete pyece of bakon wel
salted / the whiche he tourned and retourned vp
sodoune / And whan he had torned and retorne
hit longe / ynough / he sayd / I dayne not to ete
of this mete / by cause that hit shold cause me
for to drynke moche / for it is to falte And as
myn ers songe to me laft I shalle ete this same
day better and more delycious mete / ¶ And
thenne he beganne to walke ferther / And as he
entryd in to a fayr medowe / he sawe a mare /
and her yong foole with her / and sayd to hym
self alone / I rendre thankes and graces to the
goddes of the godes that they send me / For wel
I wylt and was certayne / that this daye I shold
fynde somme precious mete / And thenne he
came nyghe the mare and sayd to her / Certaynly
my suster I shalle ete thy child / And the mare
ansuerd to hym / My broder doo what someuer
hit shalle please the / But syrst I praye the that
one playfyre thou wylt do to me / I haue herd
saye that thou art a good Cyrurgyen / wherfore
I praye the / that thou wylt hele me of my foote /
I faye to the my good broder / that yefter daye
as I wente within the forest / a thorne entryd in
to one of my feet behynd / the whiche greueth
me sore / I praye the / that or thou ete my
fool / thou wylt drawe and haue it oute of my
foote / And the wulf answerd to the mare that
shalle I doo gladly my good suster / shewe me
thy

thy foote / ¶ And as the mare shewed his foote
to the wulf / she gaf to the wulf suche a stroke
bytwexe bothe his eyen / that alle his hede was
aftonyed and felle doune to the ground / and a
longe space was the wulf lyenge vpon the erthe /
as deed / And whanne he was come to hym self
ageyne / and that he coud speke / he sayd / I care
not for this myshap / For wel I wote that yet
this day I shalle ete / and be fyllid of delycious
mete / And in sayenge these wordes lyft hym
self vp / and wente aweye / ¶ And whanne he
had walked and gone a whyle / he fond two
rammes within a medowe whiche with theyr
hornes lauched eche other / And the wulf sayd
to hymself / Blessed be god / that now I shal
be wel fedde / he thenne came nyghe the two
rammes / & faid / Certaynly I shall ete the one
of you two And one of them sayd to hym /
My lord doo alle that it plese yow / but fyrst ye
must gyue vs the sentence of a proesse of a
plee whiche is bytwixe vs bothe / And the wulf
ansuerd / that with ryght a good wylle he wold
doo hit / And after sayd to them / My lordes
telle my your resons and caas / to thende that the
better I may gyue the sentence of your dyferent
and question / And thenne one of them beganne
to say / My lord / this medowe was bylongyng
to our fader / And by cause that he deyde with-
oute

oute makynge ony ordenaunce or testament / we
be now in debate and stryf for the partyng of
hit / wherfore we praye the that thow vouche-
sauf to accorde oure dyferent / so that pees
be made bytwene vs / And thenne the wulf
demaunded of the rammes how theyr question
myght be accorded / Ryght wel sayd one of
them / by one manere / whiche I shal telle to
the / yf hit please to the to here me / we two
shalle be at the two endes of the medowe / and
thow shalt be in the myddes of it / And fro
thende of the medowe / we bothe at ones shalle
renne toward the / And he that fyrist shalle come
to the / shalle be lord of the medowe / And the
laist shalle be thyn / Wel thene sayd the wulf /
thyn aduys is good and wel purposed / late see
now who fyrist shalle come to me / Thenne wente
the two rammes to renne toward the wulf / And
with alle theyr myght came and gaf to hym
suche two strokes bothe at ones ageynst bothe
his sydes / that almost they brake his herte within
his bely / & then fyll doun the poure wulf alle
aswowned / And the rammes wente theyr way /
¶ And whanne he was come ageyn to hym self /
he took courage and departed / sayenge to hym
self / I care not for alle this Iniurye and shame /
For as myn ers dyde synge to me / yet shalle I
this day ete somme good and delyicious mete /

¶ He

¶ He had not long walked / whanne he fond a
fowe / and her smal pygges with her / And In-
contynent as he sawe her / he sayd / blessed be
god of that I shalle this daye ete and fylle my
bely with precious metes / and shalle haue good
fortune / And in that fayenge approched to the
fowe / & sayd to her / My suster I must ete
somme of thy yonge pygges And the fowe wente
and sayd to hym / my lord I am content of alle
that / whiche pleafeth to yow / But or ye ete
them / I praye yow that they maye be baptysed
and made clene in pure and fayre water / And
the wulf sayd to the fowe / Shewe me thenne
the water / And I shalle wasshe and baptyse
them wel / And thenne the fowe wente and
ledde hym at a stange or pond where as was a
fayr mylle ¶ And as the wulf was vpon the
lytyl brydge of the sayd mylle / and that he wold
haue take one pygge / the fowe threwe the wulf
in to the water with her hede / and for the swyft-
nesse of the water / he must nedes passe vnder
the whele of the mylle / And god wote yf the
wynges of the mylle bete hym wel or not / And
as soone as he myght / he ranne away / And as
he ranne seyd to hym self / I care not for soo
lytyl a shame / ne therfore I shall not be bette /
but that I shalle yet this daye ete my bely full
of metes delycious / as myn ers dyd synge it erly

to

to me/ ¶ And as he passed thurgh the strete/
he sawe somme sheep/ and as the shepe sawe
hym/ they entryd in to a stable/ ¶ And whan
the wulf came there he sayd to them in this
manere/ God kepe you my fusters/ I must ete
one of yow/ to thende/ that I may be fyllid
and rassasyed of my grete honger/ And thenne
one of them sayd to hym/ Certaynly my lord/
ye are welcome to passe/ For we ben comen
hyder for to hold a grete solempnyte/ wherfore
we alle praye yow/ that ye pontyfycally wylle
synge And after the seruise complete and done/
doo what ye wyll of the one of vs/ & thenne the
wulf for vayn glory/ faynyng to be a prelate be-
ganne to synge and to howle before the sheep/
¶ And whanne the men of the toun herd the
voys of the wulf/ they came to the stable with
grete staues and with grete dogges/ and wonderly
they wounded the wulf/ and almost brought
hym to deth/ that with grete payne he coude
goo/ neuertheles he scaped/ and wente vnder
a grete tree/ vpon the whiche tree was a man
whiche hewe of the bowes of the tree/ The
wulf thenne beganne to syghe sore/ and to make
grete sorowe of his euylle fortune/ and sayd/ Ha
Jupiter how many euyls haue I had and suffred
this daye/ but wel I presume and knowe/ that
hit is by me and by myn owne cause/ and by

my

L

my proud thoughte / For the daye in the mornynge I fond a sak ful of talowe / the whiche I dayned not but only smelle hit. And after I fond a grete pycece of bakon / the whiche I wold neuer ete for drede of grete thurst and for my folysshe thought / And therfore yf euylle is syn happed to me it is wel bestowed and employed / My fader was neuer medecyn ne leche/ and also I haue not studyed and lerned in the scyence of medycyn or phisike / therfore if it happeth euylle to me / whanne I wold drawe the thorne oute of the mares fote it is wel employed / ¶ Item my fader was neuer neyther patryarde ne Bisshop / and also I was neuer lettred / and yet I presumed / and toke on me for to sacryfyce and to synge before the goddes / faynyng my self to be a prelate / but after my deserte I was wel rewarded / ¶ Item my fader was no legist ne neuer knewe the lawes / ne also man of Justyce / and to gyue sentence of a plee / I wold entremete me / and fayned my self grete Justycer / but I knewe neyther / a / ne / b / ¶ And yf therfore euylle is come to me / it is of me as of ryght it shold be / O Jupyter I am worthy of gretter punycyon whanne I haue offendes in so many maners / fende thow now to me from thyn hyghe throne a fwerd or other vepen /

vepen / wherwith I maye strongly punysshe and
bete me by grete penaunce / For wel worthy I
am to receyue a gretter desciplyne / And the
good man whiche was vpon the tree / herkened
alle these wordes and deuyses / and sayd no
word / ¶ And whanne the wulf had fynysshed
alle his sygnes and complayntes / the good man
toke his axe / wherwith he had kytte awey the
dede braunches fro the tre / and cast it vpon the
wulf / and it felle vpon his neck in fuche maner
that the wulf torned vpsodoun the feet vpward
and laye as had ben dede / And whan the wulf
myght releue and dresse hym self / he loked and
byheld vpward to the heuen / and beganne thus
to crye / Ha Jupiter I see now wel that thou
haft herd and enhaunced my prayer / and thenne
he perceyued the man whiche was vpon the tree /
& wel wende that he had ben Jupiter / And
thenne with alle his myght he fledde towards
the forest sore wounded / and rendred hym self
to humylyte / and more meke and humble he
was afterwards than euer before he had ben
fyers ne prowde / ¶ And by this fable men
may knowe and see that moche resteth to be
done of that / that a foole thynketh / And hit
sheweth to vs / that whan somme good cometh
to somme / it ought not to be reffused / For it
maye

maye not ben recouerd as men wyll / And also
it sheweth / hou none ought to auaunte hym to
doo a thynge whiche he can not doo / but ther-
fore euery man ought to gouerne and rewle
hym self after his estate and faculte /

¶ The xij fable is of the enuyous dogge /



One ought not to haue enuye of
good of other / As it appiereth
by this fable / Of a dogge whiche-
was enuyous / and that somtyme
was within a stable of oxen / the
whiche was ful of heye / This dogge kept the
oxen that they shold not entre in to theyr stable /
and that they shold not ete of the sayd heye / And
thenne the oxen sayd to hym / thow arte wel
peruers and euylle to haue enuye of the good /
the whiche is to vs nedfull and prouffitable /
and thow hast of hit nought to doo / for thy
kynde is not to ete no heye / And thus he dyd of
a grete bone / the whiche he held at his mouthe /
and wold not leue hit by cause and for enuye of
another dogge / whiche was therby / And ther-
fore kepe the wel fro the company or felauship
of an enuyous body / For to haue to doo with
hym hit is moche peryllous and dyffycyle / As
to vs is wel shewen by Lucyfer

¶ The xiij fable is of the wulf and of the
hongry dogge /



Uche supposen somtyme wynne that
lesen / As hit appiereth by this
Fable / For hit is sayd comunly
that as moche despendeth the
nygard as the large / As hit ap-
piereth by this fable of a man whiche had a grete
herd of sheep / And also he had a dogge for to
kepe them fro the wulues / To this dogge he gaf
no mete / for the grete auaryce whiche held hym /
And therfore the wulf on a daye came to the
dogge and demaunded of hym the rayson / why
he was soo lene / and sayd to hym / I see wel
that thow dyeſt for honger / by cause that thy
mayſter gyueth the no mete / by his grete ſcar-
cyte / but yf thow wylt byleue me I ſhalle gyuue
to the good counceytle / And the dogge ſayd to
hym / Certaynly I myſter gretely of good coun-
ceytle / ¶ Thenne the wulf ſayd to hym / This
ſhalt thou doo / Lete me take a lambe / And
whanne I ſhalle haue hit I ſhalle renne awey /
and whanne thou ſhalt ſee me renne / make
thenne

thenne semblant to renne after me / and lete thy
self falle faynyng that thow canst not ouertake
me / for lack and fawte of mete / whiche maketh
the so feble / And thus whanne the sheepherd
shalle see that thow mayst not haue the lambe fro
me by cause of the grete feblenesse and deblyte
of thy lene body / he shell telle to thy lord that
thow myghtest not socoure the lambe / by cause
that thow arte so sore ahongryd / and by this
means thow shalt haue mete thy bely ful / ¶ The
dogge thenne acorded this with the wulf / and
eche of them made and dyde as aboue is sayd /
¶ And whane the sheep herd sawe the dogge
falle / suposed wel / that honger was a cause of
it Forthe whiche cause whanne one of the
sheep herdes came home he told hit to his may-
ster / And whan the mayster vnderstood hit / he
sayd as a man wroth for shame / I wylle that
fro hens forthon he haue breed ynough / ¶ And
thenne euery daye the sayd dogge hadde soppes
of brede / and of drye breed he hadde ynough /
¶ Thenne the dogge toke strengthe / and vgyour
ageyne / ¶ It happed within a lytyl whyle after /
that the wulf came ageyne to the dogge / and sayd
to hym / I perceyue wel / that I gaf to the good
cunceylle / And the dogge sayd to the wulf /
My broder thow sayst foothe / wherfore I thanke
the moche / For of hit I hadde grete nede /
¶ And

¶ And thenne the wulf sayd to hym / yf thou
 wylt I shall gyue to the yet better cunceylle /
 And the dogge ansuerd hym with ryght a good
 wylle I shalle here hit / And yf hit be good I
 shalle do after hit / ¶ Thenne sayd the wulf to
 hym Lete me take yet another lambe / and doo
 thy dylgence for to haue hit fro me / and to
 byte me / and I shalle ouerthrowe the thy feet
 vpward / as he that hath no puyffance ne
 strength withoute hurtyng of thy self / byleue
 me hardyly / and wel hit shalle happe to the /
 And whanne thy maysters seruaunts shalle haue
 sene thy dylgence / they shal shewen hit to thy
 mayster how that thou shal kepe ful wel his
 folde / yf thou be wel nouriſhed / ¶ And
 thenne the dogge ansuerd to the wulf that he
 was contente / And as hit was sayd / ryght so
 hit was done / and bothe of them maad good
 dylgence The wulf bere aweye the lambe /
 and the dogge renne after hym / and ouertook
 hym / & bote hym fayntly / And the wulf ouer-
 throwe the dogge vpsodoune to the ground /
 And whan the shepherdes fawe gyue fuche
 strokes amonge the dogge & the Wulf / sayd
 Certaynly we haue a good dogge / we muste telle
 his dylgence to our mayster / and soo they dyd /
 & how he bote the wulf / and how he was ouer-
 thrown / And yet sayd Certaynly yf he hadde
 hadde

hadde euer mete ynough/ the wulf had not
borne awey the lambe/ Thenne the lord com-
maunded to gyue hym plente of mete/ wherof
the dogge took ageyne al strengthe and vertue/
And within a whyle after the wulf came ageyne
to the dogge/ and sayd to hym in this manere/
My broder haue I not gyuen to the good coun-
ceylle/ And thenne the dogge ansuerd to hym/
Certaynly ye/ wherof I thanke yow/ And the
wulf sayd to the dogge/ I praye the my broder
and my good frend that thou wylt yet gyue
another lambe/ and the dogge sayd to hym/
Certaynly my broder/ wel hit maye suffyfe the
to haue had tweyne of them/ ¶ Thenne sayd
the wulf to the dogge/ ¶ At the left waye I
maye haue one for my labour and fallarye/ That
shalt thou not haue sayd the dogge/ Hast thou
not had good fallarye for to haue hadde two
lambes oute of my maysters herd/ ¶ And the
wulf ansuerd to hym ageyne/ My brother gyue
hit me yf hit please the/ ¶ And after sayd the
dogge to hym/ Nay I wylle not/ And yf thou
takeft hit ageynste my wylle/ I promytte and
warne the/ that neuer after tyme thou shalt
ete none/ And thenne the wulf sayd to hym/
Allas my broder I deye for honger/ Counceylle
me for goddys loue what I shalle doo/ And the
dogge sayd to hym/ I shal coucayle the wel a
walle

walle of my maysters celer is fallen doun / go
thyder this nyght and entre in hit / and there
thow mayst both ete and drynke after thy play-
syr / For bothe breed fleshe and wyn shalt thow
fynde at plente there within / And thenne the
wulf sayd to hym / Allas my broder / beware
wel thenne / that thow accuse ne deceyue me
not / And the dogge ansuerd / I waraunt the /
but doo thy faythe foo pruely / that none of my
felawes knowe not of hit / ¶ And the wulf
came at the nyght / and entryd in to the celer /
and / ete and dranke at his playfyre / In so
muche that he waxed dronke And whanne he
hadde dronke foo moche / that he was dronke /
He sayd to hym self / whanne the vylaynes ben
fylled wyth metes / and that they ben dronke /
they syngyng theyr songes / and I wherfore shold
I not syngyng / ¶ And thenne he beganne to crye
and to howle / And the dogges herd the voys of
hym wherfore they beganne to barke and to
howle / And the seruaunts whiche herd them
sayd / It is the wulf / whiche is entryd within
the celer / And thenne they al to gyder wenten
thyder / and kylled the wulf / And therfore
more despendeth the nygard than the large /
For auaryce was neuer good / For many one
ben whiche dare not ete ne drynke as nature
requyreth / But neuertheles euery one oughte
to

to use and lyue prudently of all suche goodes
as god sendeth to hym / This fable also sheweth
to vs / that none ought to do ageynste his kynde /
as of the wulf whiche wexed dronke / for the
whiche cause he was flayne

¶ The xiij fable maketh mencyon of the fader
and of his thre children



E is not wyse / whiche for to haue
vanyte and his plesyr taketh debate
or stryf / As hit appiereth by this
fable / Of a man whiche hadde
thre children / and at the houre
of his dethe he byquethed / and gaf to them his
herytage or lyuehode / that is to wete a grete
pere tree / a gote & a mylle / ¶ And whanne
the fader was deed / the bretheren assembled
them thre to gyder / and wente before the Juge
for to parte their lyuehode / and sayd to the
Juge / My lord the Juge / Oure fader is dede
whiche hath byquethed to vs thre bretheren al
his herytage and as moche of hit shold haue
the one as the other And thenne the Juge
demaunded / what was theyr lyuehode / And
they ansuerd a pere tree / a gote and a mylle /
And thenne the Juge sayd to them / that they
shold sette and make partyes egal of your lyue-
lede / And the one to haue as moche of hit as
the other / hit is a thynge moche dyffycyle to
doo / but to your aduys how shold ye parte it /
And

And thenne the eldest of the three bretheren
spake and sayd / I shalle take fro the pere tree
alle that is crooked and vpright / And the second
sayd / I shalle take fro the pere tree alle that is
grene and drye / And the thyrd sayd I shalle
haue alle the rote / the pulle or maste and alle
the branches of the pere tree / ¶ And thenne
the Juge sayd to them / He that thenne shalle
haue the most parte of the tree / lete hym be
Juge / For I ne none other may know ne
vnderstante who shalle haue the more or lesse
parte / And therfore he that can or shalle proue
more openly / that he hath the most parte shal
be lord of the tree / ¶ And after the Juge de-
maunded of them / how that theyr fader had
deuyfed to them the gote / And they sayd to
hym / he that shalle make the fayrest prayer and
request must haue the gote / And thene the
fyrste broder made his request / and sayd in this
manere / wold god that the goot were now soo
grete that she myght drynke alle the water
whiche is vnder the cope of heuen / And that
whanne she hadde dronken it / she shold yet be
sore thursty ¶ The second sayd / I suppose that
the gote shalle be myn / For a fayrer demaunde
or request than thyn is I shalle now make / ¶ I
wold / that alle the hempe / and alle the Flaxe
and alle the wulle of the worlde were made in
one

one threed alone / And that the Gote were so
grete / that with that fame threde men myght
not bynde one of his legges / ¶ Thenne sayd
thirdde / yet shalle be myn the gote / ¶ For I
wolde / that he were so grete / that yf an Egle
were at the vppermost of the heuen / he myght
occupye and haue thenne as moche place as the
Egle myght loke and see in hyght / in lengthe and
in breed / ¶ And thenne the Juge sayde to them
thre / who is he of yow thre / that hath maade the
fayrefte prayer / Certaynly I nor none other canne
not faye ne gyue the Jugement / And therfore
the goote shalle be bylongyng to hym that of
hit shalle say the trouthe ¶ And the Malle how
was hit deuyseyd by your Fader for to be parted
amonge yow thre / ¶ And they ansuerde and
sayde to the Juge / He that shalle be moost lyer /
mooste euylle and most flowe ought to haue hit /
¶ Thenne say the eldest sone / I am moost flow-
full / For many yeres I haue dwellyd in a grete
hous / and laye vnder the conduytes of the same /
oute of the whiche felle vpon me alle the fowle
waters / as pysse / dysshe water / and alle other
fylthe that wonderly stanke / In so moche that
al my fleshe was rotten therof / and myn eyen
al blynd / and the durt vnder my back was a foot
hyghe / And yet by my grete flouthe I hadde
leuer to abyde there / than to tourne me / and
haue lyfte me vp ¶ The

¶ The seconde sayd / I suppose wel / that the
mylle shalle be myn / For yf I had fasted twenty
yere / And yf I hadde come to a table couerd of
al maner of precious and delyate metes / therof
I myght wel ete yf I wold take of the best / I
am so slouthfull that I maye not ete Withoute
þone shold putte the mete in to my mouthe /

¶ And the thyrde sayd / the mylle shalle be
myn / For I am yet a gretter lyar and more
slouthfull / than ony of yow bothe / For yf I
hadde ben athurst vnto the dethe / And yf I
found thenne my self within a fayre water into
the neck / I wold rather deye / than to meue ones
my heed for to drynke therof only one drop /
¶ Thenne sayd the Juge to them / Ye wote not
what ye fayse / For I nor none other maye not
wel vnderstante yow / But the cause I remytte
and put amonge yow thre / And thus they wente
withoute ony sentence / For to folyshe de-
maunde behoueth a folyshe ansuere

¶ And therfore they ben fooles that wylle
plete fuche vanyte one ageynste other / And
many one ben fallen therfore in grete pouerte /
For for a lytyl thyng ought to be made a lytyl
plee

¶ The xiij table is of the wulf and of the foxe



One maye not be mayster without
 he haue be fyrsyte a disciple / As
 hit appiereth by this Fable / Of
 a Foxe whiche came toward a
 wulf / and sayd to hym / My lord
 I praye yow that ye wylle be my godsep /
 And the wulf ansuerd / I am content / And the
 foxe toke to hym his sone prayenge hym that to
 his sone he wold shewe and lerne good doctryne /
 the whiche the wulf tooke / and wente with hym
 vpon a montayne / And thenne he sayd to the
 lytyll foxe whanne the beefles shalle come to the
 feldes calle me / And the foxe wente and sawe
 fro the top of the hylle / how the beeftes were
 comynge to the feldes / and forth with he wente
 and called his godfader / and sayd My godfader
 the beeftes comen in to the feldes / And the wulf
 demaunded of hym / what bestes are they / and
 the fox ansuerd / they be bothe kyne & swyn to
 gyder / Wel sayd the wulf / I gyue no force for
 them / lete them go for the dogges ben with
 them / And soone after the foxe dyd loke on
 another syde / and perceyued the mare whiche
 wente

wente to the feldes / and he wente to his godfader & sayd / godfader the mare is goo to the feldes / & the wulf demaunded of hym where aboute is the / And the foxe ansuered she is by the forest / And the wulf sayd / Now go we to dyner / And the wulf with his godfone entryd in to the wood / and came to the mare / ¶ The wulf perceyued wel and sawe a yonge colt / whiche was by his moder / the wulf tooke hym by the neck with his teethe and drewe hit within the wood / and ete & deuoured hym bytwene them bothe / ¶ And whan they had wel eten the godson sayd to his godfader / My godfader I commaunde yow to god and moche I thanke yow your doctrine / For wel ye haue taught me / in so moche / that now I am a grete clerke / & now I wylle goo toward my moder / And thenne the wulf sayd to his godson / My godfone yf thow goft awey / thow shalt repente the therfore / For thow haft not yet wel studyed / and knowest not yet the Sylogysmes / ¶ Ha my godfader sayd the Foxe / I knowe wel al / ¶ And the wulf sayd to hym / Sythe thow wylt goo / to god I commaunde the /

¶ And whanne the Foxe was come toward his moder / she sayd to hym / Certaynly / thow haft not yet studyed ynough / ¶ And he thenne sayd to her / Moder I am soo grete a clerke that

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I can cast the deuylle fro the clyf/ Lete vs go
chace/ and ye shalle see yf I haue lerned ought
or not/ ¶ And the yong foxe wold haue done
as his godfader the wulf dede/ and said to his
moder/ make good watche/ ¶ And whanne
the beestes shalle come to the feld/ lete me
haue therof knowlege/ And his moder sayd/
wel my sone so shalle I doo/ She maade good
watche/ And whanne she fawe that bothe kyne
and swyne wente to the feldes/ she sayd thenne
to hym My sone the kyne and the swyn to gyder
ben in the feldes/ And he ansuerd/ My moder
of them I retche not/ lete them goo/ for the
dogges kepe them wel/ ¶ And within a short
whyle after/ the moder fawe come the mare
nyghe vnto a wode/ and wente/ and sayd to
her sone/ My sone the mare is nyghe the wood
And he ansuerd/ My moder these ben good
tydylges/ Abyde ye here/ For I goo to fetche
our dyner/ and wente and entred in to the
Wode/ And after wold doo as his godfader
dyd before/ and wente and tooke the mare by
the neck/ But the mare tooke hym with her
teeth/ and bare hym to the sheepherd And
the moder cryed from the top of the hylle/
My sone lete goo the mare/ and come hyder
ageyne/ but he myght not/ For the mare
held hym fast with her teethe/ ¶ And as the
sheepherde

sheepherde came for to kylle hym / the moder
cryed and fayd wepynge / Allas my sone thow
dydeft not lerne wel / And haft ben to lytel
a whyle atte schole / wherfore thow must now
deye myferably / And the sheepherdes took and
flewe hym / For none ought to say hym self
mayster withoute that he haue fyrst studyed /
For some wene to be a grete clerke / that can
nothyng of clergye /

¶ The xv fable is of the dogge / of the wulf and
of the wether



Rete folye is to a fool that hath no
myght / that wylle begyle another
stronger thā hym self / as reher-
ceth this fable of a fader of
famylle whiche had a grete herd
or flock of sheep / and had a grete dogge for to
kepe them which was wel stronge / And of his
voys all the wolues were aferd wherfore the
sheepheard slepte more surely / but it happed /
that this dogge for his grete age deyde / wher-
fore the sheepherdes were sore troubled and
wrothe / and sayd one to other / we shall no
more slepe at oure ease by cause that our dogge
is dede / for the wulues shall now come and
ete our sheep / ¶ And thenne a grete wether
fyers and proud / whiche herd alle these wordes
came to them and sayd / I shalle gyue yow good
cunceytle / Shau me / and put on me the
skynne of the dogge And whanne the wulues
shalle see me / they shalle haue grete fere of me /
¶ And whanne the wulues came and sawe the
wether clothed with the skynne of the dogge /
they

they beganne all to flee / and ranne awey / ¶ It happed on a day that a wulf whiche was fore hongry / came and toke a lambe / and after ran awaye therwith / ¶ And thenne the sayd wether ranne after hym / And the wulf whiche suposedy that it had ben the dogge shote thryes by the waye for the grete fere that he had / And ranne euer as fast as he coude / and the wether also ranne after hym withoute cesse / tyl that he ranne thurgh a buffe full of sharp thornes / the whiche thornes rente and brake alle the dogges skynne / whiche was on hym / And as the wulf loked and sawe behynde hym / beyng moche doubtous of his dethe / sawe and perceyued alle the decepcion and falshede of the wether / And forthwith retorneyd ageynste hym / and demaunded of hym / what beeft arte thou / And the wether ansuerd to hym in this maner / My lord I am a wether whiche playeth with the / And the wulf sayd / Ha mayster ought ye to playe with your mayster and with your lord / thou hast made me so sore aferd / that by the waye as I ranne before the / I dyte shyte thre grete toordes / And thene the wulf ledde hym unto the place where as he had shyte / sayenge thus to hym / loke hyther / callest thou this a playe / I take hit not for playe / For now I shalle shewe to the / how thou oughtest not to playe so with thy lord / And thenne
the

the wulf took and kylled hym / and deuoured
and ete hym / ¶ And therfore he that is wyse
muste take good hede / how he playeth with
hym whiche is wyser / more sage / and more
stronge / than hym self is /

¶ The xvj fable maketh menyon of the man / of
the lyon & of his sone



E that refuseth the good doctryne
of his fader / yf euyl happe cometh
to hym / it is but ryght / As to vs
reherceth this fable of a labourer /
whiche somtyme lyued in a deserte
of his cultuyng and laboure / In this deserte
was a lyon / whiche wafted and destroyed all
the fede / which euery daye the sayd labourer
fewed / and also this lyon destroyed his trees /
And by cause that he bare and dyd to hym so
grete harme and dommage / he made an hedge /
to the whiche he putte and fette cordes and
nettes for to take lyon / And ones as this lyon
came for to ete corne he entryed within a nette /
& was taken / And thenne the good man came
thyder / and bete and smote hym so wonderly /
that vnnethe he myght scape fro deth / And by
cause that the lyon fawe that he myght not
escape the subtylyte of the man / he took his
lytyl lyon / and went to dwelle in another
Regyon / and within a lytyl whyle after that
the lyon was wel growen and was fyers &
stronge

stronge he demaunded of his fader / My fader
be we of this Regyon / Nay sayd the fader /
For we ben fledde awey fro oure land / And
thenne the lytyl lyon asked / wherfore / And
the fader ansuerd to hym / For the subtylyte of
the man / And the lytyl lyon demaunded of
hym what man is that / And his fader fayd to
hym / he is not so grete ne so stronge as we
be / but he is more subtyle and more Ingenyous /
than we be / and thene sayd the sone to the
fader / I shalle goo auenge me on hym And
the grete lyon sayd to hym / goo not / For yf
thow goft thyder thow shalt repente the ther-
fore / and shalt doo lyke a fole And the sone
ansuerd to his fader / Ha by my heed I shalle goo
thyder / and shalle see what he can doo / And
as he wente for to fynde the man / he mette an
oxe within a medowe / and an hors whose back
was al fleyen / and sore / to whome he said in
this manere / who is he that hath ledde yow
hyder / and that so hath so hurted yow / And
they sayd to hym / It is the man / ¶ And
thenne he sayd ageyne to them / Certaynly /
here is a wonder thynge / I praye yow / that
ye wylle shewe hym to me And they wente
and shewed to hym the labourer / which ered
the erthe / And the lyon forthwith and with-
oute sayinge of ony moo wordes wente toward
the

the man / to whome he sayd in this maner /
Ha man thou haft done ouer many euyls /
bothe to me and to my Fader / and in lyke
wyse to oure beeftes / Wherfore I telle the that
to me thou shalt doo Justyce / And the man
answred to hym / I promytte and warne the /
that yf thou come nyghe me I shalle flee with
this greete clubbe / And after with this knyf I
shall flee the / And the lyon sayd to hym /
Come thenne before my fader / and he as kynge
shalle doo to vs good Justyce / And thenne the
man sayd to the lyon / I am content / yf that
thow wylt swere to me / that thou shalt not
touche me / tyll that we ben in the presence of
thy fader / And in lyke wyse I shalle swere to
the / that I shal go with the vnto the presence
of thy fader / And thus the lyon and the man
swered eche one to other / and wente toward
the grete lyon / and the man beganne to goo
by the way where as his cordes and nettes were
dressed / And as they wente / the lyon lete hym
self falle within a corde / and by the feet he was
take / so that he myghte not farther goo / And
by cause he coude not goo he sayd to the man /
O man I prey the that thou wilt helpe me /
For I may no more goo / And the man answred
to hym / I am sworne to the that I shalle not
touche the vnto the tyme that we ben before thy
fader /

fader / And as the lyon supposed to haue vnbound
hym self for to scape / he fylle in to another nette
And thenne the lyon beganne to crye after the
man / sayenge to hym in this manere / O good
man I praye the that thou wilt vnbynde me /
And the man beganne to smyte hym vpon the
hede / ¶ And thenne whanne the lyon sawe
that he myght not scape / he sayd to the man /
I praye the / that thou smyte me no more vpon
the heed / but vpon myn erys / by cause that I
wold not here the good counceytle of my fader /
And thenne the man beganne to smyte hym at
the herte and slewe hym / the whiche thyng
happeth ofte to many children whiche ben
hanged or by other maner executed and put to
dethe / by cause that they wil not byleue the
doctryne of theyr faders and moders / ne obeye
to them by no wyse

¶ The xvi fable is of the knyght and of the
seruaunt / the whiche fonde the Foxe /



Any ben that for theyr grete lefynges
supposen to put vnder alle the
world / but euer at last theyr le-
fynges ben knownen and many-
fested / as hit appiereth by this
fable of a knyght whiche somtyme wente with
an archer of his thurgh the lande / And as they
rode / they fonde a Foxe And the knyght sayd
to the archer in good soothe I see a grete Foxe /
And the archer beganne to saye to his lord / My
lord / merueytle ye therof / I haue ben in a Regyon
where as the Foxes ben as grete as an oxe / And
the knyght ansuerd In good soothe theyr skynnes
were good for to make mantels with / yf skynners
myght haue them / And as they were rydynge /
they felle in many wordes and deuyfes / And
thenne by cause the knyght perceyued wel the
lefynge of his Archer / he beganne to make
preyers and orysfons to the goddes / for to make his
Archer aferd / And sayd in this manere / O Jupiter
god almyghty / ¶ I preye the / that this daye
thow wylt kepe vs fro all lefynges / so that we may
sauf

sauf passe thys flood and this grete Ryuer whiche
 is here before vs / and that we may surely come
 to oure hows / And whanne the Archer herd
 the prayer and oryson of his lord / he was moche
 abashfed ¶ And thenne the Archer demaunded
 of hym / my lord wherfore prayest thou now soo
 deuoutely / And the knygt ansuerd wost thou not
 wel that hit is wel knownen and manyfested / that
 we soone must passe a ryght grete Ryuer / And
 that he who on al this daye shalle haue made ony
 lesynge / yf he entre in hit / he shalle neuer come
 oute of hit ageyne / Of the whiche wordes the
 Archer was moche doubtous and dredeful / And
 as they had ryden a lytyl waye / they fond a lytyl
 Ryuer / wherfore the Archer demaunded of his
 lord / Is this the flood whiche we must passe / Nay
 sayd the knyght / For hit is wel gretter / O my
 lord I saye by cause that the foxe whiche ye sawe
 may wel haue swymmed and passed ouer this lytyl
 water / And the lord sayd / I care not therfore /
 ¶ And after that they had ryden a lytyl ferther /
 the fond another lytyll Ryuer / And the Archer
 demaunded of hym / Is this the flood that ye spake
 of to me / Nay sayd he / For hit is gretter &
 more brode / And the Archer sayd ageyne to
 hym / My lord I say so / by cause that the foxe
 of the whiche I spake of to daye was not gretter
 than a calf / ¶ And thene the knyght herkyng
 the

the dyffymylacion of his archer / answerd not /
And soo they rode forthe so longe that they fond
yet another Ryuer And thenne the Archer
demaunded of his lord / Is this the same hit /
Nay sayd the knyght / but soone we shalle come
thereto / O my lord I saye so by cause that the
Foxe wherof I spak to yow this daye / was not
gretter than a sheep / ¶ And when they had
ryden vnto euen tyme they fond a grete Ryuer
and of a grete brede / ¶ And whan tharcher
sawe hit / he began al to shake for fere / and de-
maunded of his lord / My lord is this the Ryuer /
Ye sayd the knyght / O my lord I ensure you on
my feythe / that the Foxe of the whiche I spake
to daye / was not gretter than the Foxe / whiche
we sawe to day / wherfore I knowlege and con-
fesse to yow my synne / ¶ And thenne the knyght
beganne to smyle / and sayd to his Archer in this
manere / Also this Ryuer is no wors than the
other whiche we sawe to fore and haue passid
thurgh them / And thenne the archer had grete
vergoyne and was shameful / by cause that he
myght no more couere his lesyng / And ther-
fore hit is fayre and good for to saye euer the
trouthe / and to be trewe bothe in speche and in
dede / For a lyer is euer begyled / and his le-
syng is knownen and manyfested on hym to his
grete shame & dommage

¶ Here

¶ Here after folowen some Fables of Elspe
after the newe translacion / the whiche
Fables ben not founden ne wretton
in the booke of the philo-
sopher Romulus

C The fyrt fable is of the Egle and of the rauen



One ought to take on hym self to
 doo a thyng / whiche is peryllous
 withoute he fele hym self strong
 ynowȝ to doo hit / As reherceth
 this Fable / Of an Egle / whiche
 fleyng took a lambe / wherof the Rauen hadde
 grete enuye wherfor vpon another tyme as / the
 fayd rauen fawe a grete herd of sheep / by his
 grete enuy & pryde & by his grete oulfrage de-
 scended on them / And by suche fachon and
 manere smote a wether that his clowes abode to
 the flies of hit / In soo moche that he coude
 not flee awey / The sheep herd thenne came and
 brake and toke his wynges from hym / And after
 bare hym to his children to playe them with /
 And demaunded of hym / what byrd he was /
 And the Rauen ansuerd to hym / I supposed to
 haue ben an Egle / And by my ouerwenyng I
 wende to haue take a lambe / as the egle dyd /
 but now I knowe wel that I am a Rauen / wher-
 fore the feble ought not in no wyse to compare
 hym

hym self to the stronge / For somtyme when he
supposeth to doo more than he may / he falleth
in to grete deshonour / as hit appiereth by this
present Fable / Of a Rauen / whiche supposen
to haue ben as stronge as the egle

¶ The second fable is of the egle and of the
wesel

NOne for what so euer myght that
he haue / ought not to despreyse
the other / As hit appiereth by
this present fable of an Egle/
whiche chaced somtyme after an
hare And by cause that the hare myght not
resynte ne withstande ageynst the egle / he de-
maunded ayde and helpe of the wesel/ the whiche
tooke hym in her kepynge / And by cause that
the egle sawe the wesel soo lytyl / he despreyfed
her / and before her toke the hare / wherof the
wesel was wrothe/ And therfore the wesell wente/
and beheld the Egles nest whiche was vpon a
hyghe tree / And whanne she sawe hit / the lytell
wesell clymmed vpon a tree / and toke and cast
doune to the ground the yonge egles wherfore
they deyde / And for this cause was the Egle
muche wrothe and angry / and after wente to the
god Jupiter And prayd hym that he wold fynde
hym a sure place where as he myght leye
his egges and his lytyl chykynes / And Jupiter
graunted hit and gaf hym suche a gyfte/ that
whan

N

whan the tyme of childynge shold come / that
she shold make her yong Egles within his bosome /
And thenne whanne the wesel knewe this / she
gadred and assembled to gyder grete quantite of
ordure of fylthe / and therof made an hyghe hylle
for to lete her self falle fro the top of hit in to
the bosome of Jupiter / And whanne Jupiter
felte the stenche of the fylthe / he beganne to
shake his bosome / and both the wesel and the
egges of the egle felle doun to the erthe / And
thus were alle the egges broken and loft / And
whanne the Egel knewe hit / she made auowe /
that she shold neuer make none egles / tyll of
the wesel she were assuerd / And therfore none
how stronge and myghty that he be / ought not
despreyse somme other / For there is none foo
lytyl / but that somtyme he may lette and auenge
hym self / wherfore doo thow ne desplayfyr to
none / that desplayfyr come not to the

C The thyrdde fable is of the Foxe and of
the gote



E whiche is wyse and sage ought
fyrst to loke and behold the ende /
or he begynneth the werke or
dede / as hyer appiereth by this
fable / Of a foxe & of a gote /
that somtyme descended and wente doun
to a depe welle / for to drynke. And Whanne
they had wel dronke / by cause that thei coude
not come vpward ageyne / the Foxe sayd to the
gote in this maner / my frend yf thou wylt helpe
me / we shall sone ben bothe oute of this welle /
For yf thou wylt sette thy two feet ageynste the
walle / I shal wel lepe vpon the / & vpon thy
horneyes And thenne I shal lepe oute of this
welle / **C** And whanne I shalle be oute of hit /
thow shalt take me by the handes / and I shal
plucke and drawe the oute of the welle / And
at this request the gote / acorded and ansuerd /
I wylle wel / And thene the gote lyfte vp his
feet ageynst the walle / and the foxe dyd so
muche by his malyce that he got out of the
welle / And whan he was oute / he began to
loke

loke on the gote / whiche was within the welle /
& thenne the gote sayd to hym / help me now
as thou hast promysed / And thene the foxe
beganne to lawhe and to scorne hym / and sayd
to hym / O mayster goote / yf thou haddest be
wel wyse with thy fayre berde / or euer thou
haddest entryd in to the welle / thou sholdest
fyrst haue taken hede / how thou sholdest haue
comen oute of hit ageyne /

¶ And therfore he whiche is wyse / yf he
wysely wylle gourne hym self / ought to take
euer good hede to the ende of his werke

¶ The fourthe fable is of the catte and of
the chyken.

HE whiche is fals of kynde / & hath
begonne to deceyue some other /
euer he wyl use his craft / As it
appiereth by this present Fable
of a kat whiche somtyme toke a
chyken / the whiche he beganne strongly to
blame / for to haue fonde somme cause that he
myght ete hit / and sayd to hym in this manere /
Come hyther thou chyken / thow dost none
other good but crye alle the nyght / thow
letest not the men slepe / And thenne the chyken
ansuerd to hym / I doo hit for theyre grete
prouffite / And ouer ageyne the catte sayd to
hym / yet is there wel wors / For thow arte
aninceste & lechour For thow knowest natu-
rellly both thy moder and thy daughter And
thenne the chyken sayd to the cat / I doo hit
by cause that my mayster maye haue egges for
his etynge / And that hys mayster for his prou-
ffyte gaf to hym bothe the moder and the
doughter for to multyple the egges / And
thenne the catte sayd to hym / by my feythe
godsep

godsep thow haft excusacions ynough / but
neuertheless thow shalt passe thurgh my throte /
for I suppose not to faste this day for alle thy
wordes / ¶ And thus is it of hym whiche is
custommed to lyue by rauyn / For he can not
kepe ne absteyne hym self fro hit / For alle
thexcasacions that be leyd on hym.

¶ The fable is of the Foxe and of the bushe.

MEn ouȝt not to demaude ne aske help of them that ben more cus-
tomed to lette than to do good
or prouffit / as it appereth by this
fable of a fox which for to scape
the peril to be taken wente vpon a thorne
bushe / whiche hurted hym sore / And wep-
ynge sayd to the bushe / I am come as to my
refuge vnto the / and thou haft hurted me vnto
the dethe / And thenne the bushe sayd to hym /
thow haft erred / and wel thou haft begyled
thy self / For thow supposest to haue taken me
as thow arte custommed to take chekyns and
hennes / ¶ And therfore men ought not to
helpe them whiche ben acustomed to doo euylle /
but men ought rather to lette them.

¶ The hi fable is of the man and of the god of
the wodes



F the euylle man som tyme prouffiteth
ſome other / he doth hit not by
his good wylle / but by force / As
reherceth to vs this fable / Of a
man whiche had in his hows an
ydolle the whiche oftyme he adoured as his god /
to whome ofte he prayed that he wold gyue to
hym moche good And the more that he prayed
hym / the more he faylled / And became pouere /
wherfore the man was wel wrothe ageynſt his
ydolle / and took hit by the legges / and smote
the hede of hit ſo ſtrongly ageynſt the walle / ſo
that it brake in to many pyeces / Oute of the
whiche ydolle yſſued a ryght grete tresoure /
wheroſt the man was ful gladde and Joyous /
And thenne the man ſayd to his ydolle / Now
knowe I wel / that thou art wycked / euyl and
peruers / For whanne I haue worshipped the /
thow haſt not holpen me / And now whanne I
haue bete the / thow haſt moche done for me /
¶ And therfore the euylle man whanne he doth
ony good / it is not of his good wylle / but by
force

¶ The viij fable is of a fyfher



Lle thynges which ben done & made
in theyr tyme & season ben wel
made / as by this present fable it
appereþ Of a fyfher whiche som-
tyme touched his bagpype nyhe
the Ryuer for to make the fyfhe to daunce /
¶ And whan he sawe that for none songe that
he coude pype / the fyfhes wold not daunce / As
wroth dyd cast his nettes in to the Ryuer / & toke
of fyfhe grete quantite / And whanne he had
drawe oute his nettes oute of the water / the
fyfhe beganne to lepe and to daunce / and thenne
he sayd to them / Certaynly hit appiereth now
wel / that ye be euylle beeftes / For now whanne
ye be taken / ye lepe and daunce / And whanne
I pyped and played of my muse or bag pype ye
dayned / ne wold not daunce / Therfore hit ap-
piereth wel that the thynges whiche ben made
in season / ben wel made and done by reaſon

¶ The eyght fable is of the catte and of the rat



E whiche is wyfe/ and that ones
 hath ben begyled/ ought not to
 trufe more hym that hath begyled
 hym As reherceth this Fable of a
 catte whiche wente in to a hows/
 where as many rats were/ the whiche he dyd
 ete eche one after other/ ¶ And whanne the
 rats perceyued the grete fyersnes and crudelyte
 of the catte/ held a cunceylle to gyder where
 as they determyned of one comyn wylle/ that
 they shold no more hold them ne come nor goo
 on the lowe floore . wherfore one of them moost
 auncyent profered and sayd to al the other suche
 wordes/ ¶ My bretheren and my frendes/ ye
 knowe wel/ that we haue a grete enemye/ whiche
 is a grete perfecutour ouer vs alle/ to whome we
 may not resyfe/ wherfor of nedē we must hold
 our self vppn the hyghe balkes/ to thende that
 he may not take vs/ Of the whiche propospcion
 or wordes the other rats were wel content and
 apayd/ and byleuyd this cunceylle/ And whanne
 the kat knewe the cunceylle of the rats/ he
 hyngē hym self by his two feet behynd at a pynne
 of

of yron whiche was flyked at a balke / feynynge
hym self to be dede / And whanne one of the
rats lokynge dounward sawe the katte beganne
to lawhe and sayd to the cat / O my Frend yf
I supposedy that thow were dede / I shold goo
doune / but wel I knowe the so fals & peruers /
that thow mayft wel haue hanged thy self / fayn-
yng to be dede / wherfore I shall not goo doune /
And therfore he that hath ben ones begyled by
somme other / ought to kepe hym wel fro the
fame

C The ix fable is of the labourer and of the
pyelarge



E whiche is taken with the wicked
and euyll ouȝte to suffre Payne
and punycyon as they / As it
appiereth by this fable / Of a la-
bourer whiche somtyme dresyd
and sette his gynnes and nettes for to take the
ghees and the cranes / Whiche ete his corne / It
happed thenne that ones amoneg a grete meyny
of ghees and cranes / he took a pyelarge / whiche
prayd the labourer in this maner / I praye the
lete me go / For I am neyther goos ne cranne
nor I am not come hyther for to do the ony
eylle / The labourer beganne thenne to lawhe /
and sayd to the pyelarge / yf thou haddeſt not be
in theyr felaufship / thou haddeſt not entryd in to
my nettes / ne haddeſt not be taken / And by
cause that thou arte founde and taken with them /
thow shalt be punyſhed as they shalle be Ther-
fore none ought to hold compayne with the euylle
with oute he wylle suffre the punycion of them
whiche ben punyſhed

¶ The tenth fable is of the child / whiche kepte
the sheep



E whiche is acustomed to make lef-
ynges / how be it that he saye
trouthe / Yet men byleue hym
not / As reherceth this fable / Of
a child whiche somtyme kepte
sheep / the whiche cryed ofte withoute cause /
sayenge / Alas for goddes loue focoure yow me /
For the wulf wylle ete my sheep / And whanne
the labourers that cultyued and ered the erthe
aboute hym / herd his crye / they come to helpe
hym / the whiche came so many tymes / and fond
nothyng / And as they sawe that there were no
wulues / they retorne to theyr labourrage / And
the child dyd so many tymes for to playe hym /
¶ It happed on a day that the wulf came / and
the child cryed as he was acustomed to doo /
And by cause that the labourers supposed / that
hit had not ben trouthe / abode styll at theyr
laboure / wherfore the wulf dyd ete the sheep /
For men byleue not lyghtly hym / whiche is
knowen for a lyer

¶ The xij fable is of the ante and of the columbe



One ought to be flowful of the good
 whiche he receyueth of other / As
 reherceth this fable of an Ante /
 whiche came to a fontayne for
 to drynke / and as she wold haue
 dronke she felle within the fontayn / vpon the
 whiche was a columbe or douue / whiche seyng
 that the Ante shold haue ben drowned withoute
 helpe / took a braunche of a tree / & cast it to
 her for to sauе her self / ¶ And the Ante wente
 anone upon the braunche and saued her / ¶ And
 anone after came a Fawkoner / whiche wold haue
 take the douue / And thenne the Ante whiche
 sawe that the Fawkoner dressyd his nettes came
 to his foote / and soo fast pryked hit / that she
 caused hym to smyte the erthe with his foote /
 and therwithe made soo gret noyse / that the douue
 herd hit / wherfore she flewhewe aveye or the
 gynne and nettes were al sette / ¶ And therfore
 none ought to forgete the benyfye whiche he
 hath receyued of some other / for flowfulnesse is
 a grete synne

¶ The xiij fable is of the Bee and of Jupiter



Ow the euyl which men wylle to
 other / cometh to hym whiche
 wylleth hit / as hit appiereth by
 this fable / of a Bee whiche offred
 and gaf to Jupyter a pyce of hony /
 wherof Jupyter was moche Joyous / And thenne
 Jupyter sayd to the bee / demaunde of me what
 thow wylt / and I shalle graunte and gyue hit to
 the gladly / And thenne the Bee prayed hym in
 this manere / God almyghty I pray the that thow
 wylt gyue to me and graute / that who so euer
 shal come for to take awey my hony / yf I pryke
 hym / he may sodenly deye / And by cause that
 Jupyter loued the humayn lygnage he sayd to
 the Bee / Suffysse the / that who so euer shalle
 goo to take thy hony / yf thow pryke or stynge
 hym / Incontynent thow shalt deye / And thus
 her prayer was tourned to her grete dommage /
 For men ought not to demaude of god / but suche
 thynges that ben good and honest

¶ The xiij fable is of a carpenter



N as moche as god is more propyce
 and benygne to the good and holy /
 moche more he punyssheth the
 wycked and euylle / As we may
 see by this fable / Of a carpenter
 whiche cutte wode vpon a Ryuer for to make a
 temple to the goddes / And as he cutte wode /
 his axe felle in the Ryuer / wherfore he beganne
 to wepe and to calle helpe of the goddes / And
 the god Mercurye for pyte appiered before hym
 And demaunded of hym wherfore he wepte / and
 shewed to hym an axe of gold / and demaunded
 of hym yf hit was the axe whiche he had lost /
 & he sayd nay / And after the god shewed to hym
 another axe of syluer / And semblably faid nay
 And by cause that Mercurius fawe that he was
 good and trewe / he drewe his axe oute of the
 water / and took hit to hym with moche good
 that he gaf to hym / And the carpenter told thy-
 story to his felawes / of the whiche one of them
 came in to the same place for to cutte woode as
 his felawe dyd before / & lete falle his axe within
 the water / and beganne / to wepe and to de-
 maund

maund the helpe and ayde of the goddes / And
thenne Mercury appiered to fore hym / and shewed
to hym an axe of gold / and demaunded of hym
in suche manere / Is the same hit that thou haft
lost / And he ansuerd to Mercury / ye fayre syre
and myghty god the same is it / And Mercury
feynge the malyce of the vylayne gaf to hym
neyther the same ne none other / and lefte hym
wepynge / For god whiche is good and Just re-
warded the good and trewe in this world / or
eche other after his deserte and punyssheth the
eylle and Iniuste

C The xiij fable is of a yonge theef and of his
moder



e whiche is not chaftyfed at the
begynnynge is euyll and peruers
at the ende / As hit appiereth by
this fable of a yonge child whiche
of his yongthe beganne to stele /
and to be a theef / And the theftys whiche he
maad / he broughte to his moder / and the moder
toke them gladly / & in no wyse she chaftyfed
hym / And after that he had done many theftys /
he was taken / and condempned to be hanged /
And as men ledde hym to the Justyce / his moder
folowed hym and wepte sore / And thenne the
child prayed to the Justyce / that he myght saye
one word to his moder / And as he approuched
to her / made semblaunt to telle her somme
wordes at her ere / & with his teeth he bote of
her nose / wherof the Justyce blamed hym / And
he anfuerd in this manere / My lordes ye haue
no cause to blame me therfore / For my moder
is

is cause of my deth For yf she had wel chaftyfed
me / I had not come to this shame and vergoyne /
For who loueth wel / wel he chaftyfeth / And
therfore chaftyfe wel youre children / to thende /
that ye falle not in to suche a caas

¶ The xv fable is of the flee and of the man.



E that dothe euyl/ how be hit
 that the euylle be not grete
 men ought not to leue hym
 vnpunysshed/ As it appereth
 by this fable/ Of a man whiche
 took a flee whiche bote hym/ to whome the
 man sayd in this manere/ Fle why bytest thou
 me/ and letest me not slepe/ and the flee
 ansuerd It is my kynd to doo foo/ wherfore
 I praye the that thou wylt not put me to
 dethe/ And the man beganne to lawhe/ &
 sayd to the flee/ how be it/ that thou mayst
 not hurte me sore/ Neuertheless/ to the be-
 houeth not to prycke me/ wherfore thou shalt
 deye/ For men ought not to leue none euyll
 vnpunysshed how be hit that hit be not grete.

¶ The xvi fable is of the husband and of his
two wyues.



No thyng is worse to the man than
the woman / As it appereth by
this fable / of a man of a meane
age / whiche tooke two wyues /
that is to wete an old / & one
yong / whiche were both dwellyng in his hows /
& by cause that the old desyred to haue his
loue / she plucked the blak herys fro his hede
and his berde / by cause he shold the more be lyke
her / And the yonge woman at the other syde
plucked

plucked and drewe oute alle the whyte herys/
to the ende/ that he shold feme the yonger/
more gay and fayrer in her syghte/ And thus
the good man abode withoute ony here on his
hede And therfore hit is grete folye to the
auncyent to wedde them self ageyne/ For to
them is better to be vnwedded/ than to be
euer in trouble with an euyl wyf/ for the
tyme in whiche they shold reste them/ they
put it to Payne and to grete labour.

¶ The xviij fable is of the labourer and of his
children.

He that laboureth and werketh con-
tynuellly maye not faylle to haue
plente of goodes / as it appiereth
by this present fable / Of a good
man labourer / whiche all his lyf
had laboured and wrought / and was ryche /
and whan he shold deye / he sayd to his chil-
dren / My children I muste now deye / and
my tresour I haue lefte in my vyne / And
after that the good man was dede / his children
whiche supposed that his tresour had ben in the
vyne / dyd nothyng al day but delued hit / &
it bare more fruyte than dyd before / ¶ For
who trauayllet wel / he hath euer brede ynough
for to ete / And he that werketh not dyeth for
honger.

¶ Here syncken the fables of Elope
¶ And after foloweth the
fables of Augan

C The fyrd fable is of the old woman and of
the wulf



En ought not by byleue on al maner
sphyrytes / As reherceth this fable
of an old woman / which said to
her child bicause that it wept /
certeynly if thou wepft ony more /
I shal make the to be ete of the wulf / & the
wulf heryng this old woman / abode stylly to fore
the yate / & supposeth to haue eten the old
womans child / & by cause that the wulf had so
longe taryed there that he was hongry / he re-
torned and went ageyne in to the wood / And
the shewulf demaunded of hym / why haft thou
not brought to me some mete / And the wulf
ansuerd / by cause / that the old woman hath be-
gyled me / the whiche had promyset to me to
gyue to me her child for to haue ete hym / And
at the lafte I hadde hit not / And therfore men
ought in no wyse to trust the woman / And he
is wel a fole that setteth his hope and trusfe in a
woman / And therfore truste them not / and thou
shalt doo as the sage and wyse

¶ The second fable is of the tortoise and of the
other byrdes



E that enhaunceth hym self more
than he oughte to do To hym
oughte not to come noo good/
As hit appiereth by this present
fable / Of a tortoise / whiche said
to the byrdes / yf ye lyft me vp wel hyghe fro
the ground to the ayer I shalle shewe to yow
grete plente of preciis stones / And the Egle toke
her and bare her so hyghe / that she myghte not
see the erthe / And the Egle sayd to her shewe
me now these preciis stones that thow promyset
to shewe to me / And by cause that the tortoise
myght not see in the erthe / and that the Egle
knewe wel that he was deceyued / thrested his
clowes in to the tortosies bely / and kylled hit /
For he that wylle haue and gete worship and
glorye may not haue hit withoute grete laboure /
Therfore hit is better and more sure / to kepe
hym lowely than to enhaunce hym self on hyghe /
and after to deye shamefully and myserably /
¶ For men sayn comynly / who so mounteth
hyher / than he shold / he falleth lower than he
wold

¶ The thyrd fable is of the two Creuysses



E whiche will teche and lerne some other / ought first to corryge & examyne hym self / as it appereth by this fable of a creuyffe / whiche wold haue chastyfed her owne daughter bicause that she wente not wel ryght / And sayd to her in this manere / My daughter / hit pleafeth me not that thou goost thus backward / For euylle myght wel therof come to the / And thenne the daughter sayd to her moder My moder I shalle go ryght and forward with a good will but ye must goo before for to shewe to me the waye / But the moder coude not other wyse goo / than after her kynd / wherfore her daughter sayd unto her / My moder fyrst lerne your self for to goo ryght and forward / and thenne ye shalle teche me And therfore he that wylle teche other / ought to shewe good ensample / For grete shame is to the doctour whanne his owne couple or faulte accuseth hym

¶ The fourthe fable is of the asse / and of the
skynne of the Lyon



NOne ought not to gloryfye hym self
of the goodes of other . as recyteth
this fable of an asse whiche som-
tyme fond the skynne of a lyon /
the whiche he dyd & wered on
hym / but he coude neuer hyde his eres ther-
with / & when he was / as he supposed wel
arayed with the sayd skynne/ he ranne in to
the forest / And whanne the wyld beestes fawe
hym come / they were so ferdfull that they alle
beganne

beganne to flee / For they wend / that it had be
the lyon / And the mayster of the asse ferched and
soughte his asse in euery place al aboute And
as he had soughte longe / he thoughte that he
wold go in to the forest for to see yf his asse
were there / And as soone as he was entryd
in to the forest / he mette with his asse arayed
as before is sayd / but his mayster whiche had
soughte hym longe fawe his erys / wherfore he
knewe hym wel / and anone toke hym / and
sayd in this manere / Ha a mayster asse / arte
thow clothed with the skynne of the lyon / thow
makest the bestes to be aferd / but yf they knewe
the / as wel as I do / they shold haue no fere of
the / but I ensure the / that wel I shalle bete the
therfore / And thenne he toke fro hym the skynne
of the lyon / and sayd to hym Lyon shalt thow be
no more / but an asse shalt thow euer be / And
his mayster tooke thenne a staf / and smote hym /
soo that euer after he remembryd hym wel of
hit / And therfore he whiche auaunceth hym
self of other mennes goodes is a very foole / For
as men sayn comynly he is not wel arayed nor
wel appoynted / whiche is clothed with others
gowne / ne also it is not honeste to make large
thonges of other mennes leder

¶ The b fable is of the frogge and of the Foxe



One ought to auaunce hym self to
 doo that whiche he he can not
 doo / As hit appiereth of a frogge /
 whiche somtyme yssued or came
 oute of a dyche / the whiche
 presumed to haue lept vpon a hyghe mon-
 tayne / And whanne she was vpon the moun-
 tayne / she sayd to other beeftes / I am a may-
 tressle in medecyn / and canne gyue remedy to
 al manere of sekenes by myn arte / and subtylyte /
 and shalle rendre and bryng yow vp ageyne in
 good helthe / wheroft some byleued her / And
 thenne the Foxe whiche perceyued the folyshe
 byleue of the beeftes / beganne to lawhe / and
 sayd to them / poure beeftes / how may this
 fowle and venemous beeft whiche is feke and
 pale of colour render and gyue to yow helthe /
 For the leche whiche wylle hele somme other /
 ought fyrste to hele hym self / For many one
 counterfayteth the leche / whiche can not a
 word of the scyence of medecyne / from the
 whiche god preferue and kepe vs

¶ The þis fable is of the two dogges



E that taketh within hym self vayne
 glorye of that thynge / by the
 whiche he shold humble hym self
 is a very fole / as hit appereth by
 this fable / of a fader of famylle /
 whiche had two dogges / of the whiche the one
 withoute ony barkyng bote the folke / & the
 other dyd barke and bote not / And whan the
 fader of famyll perceyued the shrewdnesse and
 malyce of the dogge that barkyd not he henge
 on his nek a belle / to the ende that men shold
 beware of hym / wherfore the dogge was ouer
 proud and fyers / and beganne to dyspreyse alle
 the other dogges / of the whiche one of the moost
 auncyent sayd to hym in this manere / O fole
 beest / now perceyue I wel thy foly and grete
 wodenesse to suppose / that this belle is gyuen to
 the for thyn owne deserfe and meryte / but cer-
 taynlly hit is not soo / For hit is taken to the for
 thy demerytes / and by cause of thy shrewdnesse /
 and grete treason / for to shewe / that thou arte
 fals and traytour / And therfore none oughte to
 be Joyeful and gladde of that thynge / wherof
 he

he oughte to be tryft and sorowful / as many foles
done / whiche make Joye of theyr vyses and
euyll dedes / for a moche fole were the theef
whiche that men ledde for to be hanged / and
that he had a cord of gold aboute his neck / yf
he shold make Joye therof / how be hit that the
corde were moche ryche and fayre

¶ The viij fable is of the camel and of Jupiter



Very creature ought to be content
of that / that god hath gyuen to
hym withoute to take their hery-
taunce of other / As reherceth this
fable Of a camel whiche som
tyme complayned hym to Jupiter of that the
other beeftes mocqued hym / by cause that he
was not of so grete beaute / as they were of /
wherfore to Jupiter Instantly he prayd in suchē
maner as foloweth / Fayr fyre and god / I re-
quyreand praye that thou wylt gyue to me hornes /
to thende that I maye be nomore mocqued /
Jupiter then beganne to lawhe / and in stede of
hornes / he took fro hym his erys / and sayd /
thow haft more good than hit behoueth thee to
haue / And by cause that thow demaundest that /
whiche thow oughtest not to haue I haue take
fro the that whiche of ryght and kynd thow
ouȝtest to haue / For none ought not to desyre
more than he ought to haue / to the ende that
he lese not that whiche he hath /

¶ The ryght fable is of the two felawes



En ought not to hold felauship with
 hym / whiche is acustommed to
 begyle other / As hit appiereth
 by thys Fable / Of two felawes
 whiche somtyme held felauship
 to eche other for to goo bothe by montaynes and
 valeyes And for to make better theyr vyage/they
 were sworne eche one to the other / that none
 w^t them bothe should leue other vnto that the
 tyme of dethe shold come and departe them /
 And as they walked in a forest they mette with
 a grete wyld bere / & bothe felawes ran sone awey
 for fere / of the whiche the one clynamed / vpon
 a tree / And whan the other fawe that his felawe
 had lefte hym leyd hym self on the erthe / and
 fayned to be dede / And Incontynent the bere
 came for to ete hym / but by cause the gallaunt
 playd wel his game / the bere went forthe his
 waye and touched hym not / And thēne his felawe
 came doun fro the tree whiche sayd to hym / I
 pray thee to telle me what the bere sayd to the /
 For as me semeth he spake to the / and hath

shewed

P

shewed to the grete fygne or token of loue / And
thenne his felawe sayd to hym / He taught me
many fayre secrete / but emonge alle other
thynges he sayd to me / that I shold neuer trust
hym who ones hath deceyued me

¶ The ix fable maketh mencion of the two pottes



He poure ought not to take the
Ryche as his felawe as it ap-
piereth by this fable of two pottes/
of the whiche the one was coper/
and the other of erthe / the whiche
pottes dyd mete to gyder within a Ryuer / ¶ &
by caufe that the erthen pot wente swyfter than
dyd the coper potte / the pot of coper fayd to
the pot of erthe / I praye the that we may goo
to gyder / And the erthen potte ansuerd and
fayd to the coper pot / I wylle not go with the /
For it shold happe to me as it happed to the
glas and of the morter For yf thou sholdest
mete with me / thou sholdest breke and putte
me in to pyeces / ¶ And therfore the poure is
a fole that compareth and lykeneth hym self to
the ryche and myghty / For better is to lyue in
pouerte than to deye vylaynously and oppreffyd of
the ryche

¶ The x fable is of the Lyon and of the boole

T is not alweye tyme to auenge hym
self of his enemye / As it appiereth
by this fable of a bole / whiche
somtyme fledde before a lyon /
And as the bole wold entre with-
in a cauerne for to faue hym / a gote wente
geynste hym for to kepe and lette hym that
he shold not entre in it / to whome the bole
sayd / It is not tyme now to auenge me on the /
for the lyon that chaseth me / but the tyme shalle
come that wel I shalle fynde the / For men
ought not to doo to hym self dommage for to
be auengyd of his enemy / but oughte to loke
for tyme and place couenable for to doo hit

¶ The xi fable is of the Ape and of his sone



No fowler a thyng is to the man / than
with his mouth to preyse hym self/
As this fable reherceth to vs / Of
Jupiter kynge of alle the world
whiche made alle the beeftes and
alle the byrdes to be assembled to gyder for
to knowe theyr bounte / and also theyr kynd/
Emonge alle the whiche came the Ape / whiche
presented his sone to Jupiter / sayenge thus/
Fayre syre and myghty god / loke and see here
the fairest beeft that euer thow createft in this
world / And Jupiter thenne beganne to lawhe/
and after sayd to hym / thow arte wel a fowle
beeft to preyse soo thy self / For none oughte
to preyse hym self / but oughte to doo good
and vertuous werkes / wheroft other may preyse
hym / for it is a shameful thyng to preyse hym
self

¶ The xij fable is of the crane and of the peacock



Or what vertue that ony man hath /
 none oughte to preye hym self /
 As hit apiereth by this fable / Of
 a pecok / whiche somtyme made
 a dyner to a crane / And And
 whanne they had eten and dronken ynoch /
 they had grete wordes to gyder / wherfore the
 pecok sayd to the crane / Thow haft not so fayre
 a forme ne so fayre a fygure as I haue / ne also
 fayr fethers / ne soo resplendysshynge as I haue /
 To whome the crane ansuerd / and sayd / It is
 trouthe / Neuertheles thow haft not one good / ne
 one so fayre a vertue as I haue / For how be hit
 that I haue no so fayre fethers as thow haft /
 yet can I flee better than thy self doft / For
 with thy fayre fethers thow must euer abyde
 on the erthe / and I may flee where someuer
 hit pleafeth me / And thus euerychone ought to
 haue suffysaunce and to be content of that / that
 he hath / without auanncyng or prayfynge of
 hym self / and not to dyspreye none other.

¶ The xiij fable is of the hunter and of the tygre



Erse is the stroke of a tonge / than
 the stroke of a spere as hit ap-
 piereth by this fable / Of a hunter /
 whiche with his arowes hurted the
 wyld beeftes / in suche wyse that
 none scaped fro hym / to the whiche bestes a
 tygre fyers and hard sayd in this manere / Be
 not aferd / For I shalle kepe yow well / And as
 the Tygre came in to the wode / the hunter was
 hyd within a bussh / the whiche whan he fawe
 passe the tygre before the bussh / he shote at hym
 an arowe / and hytte hym on the thye / wher-
 fore the tygre was gretely abashed And wepynge
 and sore syghyng sayd to the other beeftes / I
 wote not from whens this cometh to me / ¶ And
 whanne the foxe fawe hym so gretely abashed /
 al lawhyng sayd to hym / Ha a tygre / thow arte
 so myghty and so stonge / And thenne the tygre
 sayd to hym / My strengthe auaylled me not at
 that tyme / For none may kepe hym self fro
 treason And therfore some secrete is here / whiche
 I knewe not before But notwithstandinge this I
 maye wel conceyue / that there is no wors arowe/
 ne

ne that letteth more the man / than tharowe
whiche is shotte fro the euyll tongue/ For whanne
som persone profereth or sayth som wordes in a
felaufship / of sommen a of honest & good lyf/
alle the felaufship supposeth that that whiche this
euylle tongue hath sayd be trewe/ be hit trewe
or not / how be it that it be but lesynge/ but
notwithſtondyng the good man shalle euer be
wounded of that fame arowe/ whiche wound
shalle be Incurable/ And yf hit were a stroke of
a spere / hit myght be by the Cyrurgyen heled/
but the stroke of an euylle tongue may not be
heled / by cause that Incontynent as the word is
profered or sayd / he that hath sayd hit / is no
more mayster of hit / And for this cause the stroke
of a tongue is Incurable and withoute guaryſon

¶ The xijij fable is of the four oxen

Men oughte not to breke his feythe
 ageynste his good Frend / ne to
 leue his felauship / as hit appiereth
 by this fable / of four oxen whiche
 to gyder were in a fair medowe /
 ¶ And by cause that euer they were and kepte
 them to gyder / none other beeft durste not assaylle
 them / and also the lyon dradde them moche /
 the whiche lyon on a daye came to them / And
 by his deceyuable wordes thoughte for to begyle
 them / & to raushe & take them the better /
 maade them to be separed eche one fro other /
 ¶ And whanne they were sepered / the lyon
 wente / and toke one of them / And whan the
 lyon wold haue strangled hym / the oxe sayd to
 hym / godsep / He is a foole whiche byleueth
 fals and deceyuable wordes And leueth the felaw-
 ship of his good frende / For yf we had ben euer
 to gyder / thow haddest not taken me / And
 therfore he whiche is / and standeth wel sure /
 ought to kepe hym sooth that he falle not / For
 to whiche is wel / meue not hym self

¶ The xv fable is of the busshē / and of the
aubyer tree



One for his beaute ought not to
despreyse some other / For som-
tyme suche one is fayre that
foone wexeth lothely and fowle /
and to hyghe falleth vnto lowe /
as it apperyth by this fable / Of a fayr tree
whiche mocqued and scorned a lytyl busshē /
and sayd / ¶ Seest thou not / my fayre fourme
and my fayre fygure / And that of me men
and byldeth fayre edefyces as palays and castellis /
galeyes & other shippes for to saylle on the see /
And as he auaunced & preyed hym self thus /
came there a labourer with his axe for to hewe
and smyte hym to the ground / And as the
labourer smote vpon the fayre tree / the busshē
sayd / Certaynly my broder yf now thou were
as lytel / as I am / men shold not hewe ne smyte
the doune to the erthe / And therfore none
oughte to reioyshe hym self of his worship /
For suche is now in grete honour and worship /
that herafter shalle falle in to grete vytupere
shame and dishonour

¶ The xviij fable is of the fyssher / and of the
lytyl fysshe



En ought not to leue that thyng
whiche is sure & certayne / for
hope to haue the vncertayn / as
to vs reherceth this fable of a
fyssher whiche with his lyne toke
a lytyl fysshe whiche sayd to hym / My frend I
pray the / doo to me none euylle / ne putte
me not to dethe / For now I am nougth / for
to be eten / but whanne I shalle be grete / yf
thow come ageyne hyther / of me shalt thow
mowe haue grete auaylle / For thenne I shalle
goo with the good whyle / And the Fyssher
sayd to the fysshe . Syn I hold the now / thou
shalt not scape fro me / For grete foly hit were
to me for to seke the here another tyme / For
men ought not to lete goo that / of what they
be sure of / hopynge to haue afterwards that
that they haue not and whiche is vncertayne.

¶ The xviij fable is of phebus / of the Auarycious /
and of the enuyous



One oughte to doo harme or dom-
age to somme other for to re-
ceyue or doo his owne dommage /
As hit appereth by this fable / Of
Jupiter whiche sent phebus in to
therthe for to haue al the knowlege of the
thouȝt of men ¶ This phebus thenne mette
with two men / of whiche the one was moche
enuyous / And the other ryght couetous / Phebus
demaunded of them what theyr thought was /
We thynke said they to demaunde and aske of
the grete yefes / To the which phebus ansuerd /
Now demaunde that ye wylle / For all that that
ye shalle demaunde of me / I shalle graunte hit /
And of that / that the fyrst of yow shalle aske /
the second haue the dowble parte / or as moche
more ageyne / And thenne the auarycious sayd /
I wyl that my felawe aske what he wyl fyrst
wherof the enuyous was wel content / whiche
sayd to Phebus Fayre syre I praye the that I
maye lese one of myn eyen / to thende that
my felawe may lese al bothe his eyen / wherfor
phebus

phebus beganne to lawhe whiche departed and
wente ageyne vnto Jupiter / and told hym the
grete malyce of the enuyous / whiche was Joye-
ful and glad of the harme and dommage of an
other / & how he was wel content to suffre
payne for to haue adommaged somme other

C The xvij fable is of the theef / and of the
child whiche wepte



E is a fole that putteth his good in jeopardy to lese it for to gete & haue som others good / as it appereth by this fable of a theef whiche fond a child wepynge besyde a welle / of whom the theef dyde aske why he wepte / & the child answerd to hym I wepe / by cause that I haue lete falle within this welle a loket of gold / & thenne the theef toke of his clothes / & sette them on the ground and wente doune in to the welle / And as he was doune the child toke his gowne & lefte hym within the welle / And thus for couetyfe to wynne / he lost his gowne / For suche supposen to wynne somtyme whiche lesen / And therfore none ought to wysshe that / that he hath not / to thende that he leseth not that / that he hath / For of the thyng wrongfully and euylle gotten / the thyrd heyre shalle neuer be ppsessour of hit.

¶ The xix fable is of the lyon and of the gote

He is wyse that can kepe hym self
from the wyly and fals/ as hit
appereþ by this fable/ Of a lyon/
whiche ones mette with a gote/
whiche was vpon a montayne
And whanne the lyon sawe her/ he sayd to her
in this manere/ For to gyue to her occacion to
come doun fro the hylle/ to thende that he
myght ete her/ My fuster why comeſt thou not
hyder on this fayre and grene medowe for to ete
of these fayre herbes or graffe/ And the gote
ansuerd to hym/ How be hit/ that thou sayſt
trouthe/ Neuertheles thou sayſt it not/ neyther
for my wele ne for my prouffyte/ but thou sayſt
hit/ by cause that thou woldeſt fayne ete and
deuoure me/ but I truſte not in thy fayre ſpeche/
For many tymes I haue herd ſaye of my graūt
moder/ he that is wel/ meue not hym ſelf/ For
he whiche is in a place wel fure/ is wel a fole to
go fro hit/ and to putte hym ſelf in grete daunger
and perylle

C The xx fable was of the crowe whiche was a thurst



Better is crafte and subtylyte than force / As reherceth to vs this fable / Of a crowe whiche vpon a day came for to drynke oute of a boket / and by cause that she myght not reche to the water / the dyd fyll the boket ful of smal stones / in soo moche that the water came vpward / wherof she dranke thenne at her wylle / and playfyre / And therfore hit appiereth wel / that wytte or savyence is a moche fayr vertue For by savyence or wytte / thow shalt mowe refynte to all faultes /

¶ The xxij fable is of the vylayne and of the
yonge bole /



E whiche is of euylle and shrewd
kynd / with grete payne he may
chafty hym self / as it appereth by
this fable / Of a vylayne / whiche
had a yonge bole / the whiche he
myght not bynd / by cause that euer he smote
with his hornes / wherfore the vylayne cutte of
his hornes / ¶ But yet whan he wold haue bound
hym / the bole casted his fute fro hym / in suche
wyse that he suffred noman to come nyghe hym /
And whan the vylayne perceyued the malyce of
the bole / he sayd to hym / I shalle chaftyse the
wel / For I shalle take the in to the bouchers
handes / And thenne was the bole wel chaftyfed /
¶ And thus ought men to doo of the euylle /
curfyd & rebelles / whiche doo no thynge but
playe with dees and cardes and to ruffule / Such
folke ought men to put in to the handes of the
boucher for to lede them to the galhows / For
better may no man chaftyse them / For with
grete payne may he be chaftyfed / whiche fleeth
alle good werkes ond alle good felauship

a

¶ The xxij fable is of the viator or palmer and
of Satyre



En ought to beware & kepe hym
self from hym whiche bereth both
fyre and water / as reherceth to vs
this Fable Of a pylgrim / whiche
somtyme walked in the wynter /
and wente thurgh a grete forest / ¶ And by
cause that the snowe had couerd al the wayes /
he wist ne knewe not whyther he wente /
ageynste the whiche came a wodewose named
Satyre by cause he sawe hym a cold / whiche
aproched to the pylgrym and brought hym in
to his pytte / And whan the pylgrym sawe
hym / he hadde grete drede by cause that a
wodewose is a monstre lyke to the man / as hit
appiereth by his fygure / ¶ And as the wode-
wose or Satyre ledde the pylgrym in to his
pytte / the pylgrym dyd blowe within his handes
for to chauffe them / For he was sore cold /
And thenne the wodewose gaf to hym hote water
to drynke / ¶ And whan the pylgrym wold
haue dronken hit / he beganne to blowe in hit /
And the wodewose demaunded of hym / why
he

he dyd blowe in hit / And the pylgrym sayd to
hym / I blowe in hit / for to haue it somwhat
more cold than hit is / The wodewose thenne
sayd to hym / Thy felaufship is not good to me /
by cause that thow bereft bothe the fyre and the
water in thy mouthe / therfore go hens fro my
pyt and neuer retorne ageyne / For the felaufship
of the man whiche hath two tonges is nougnt /
And the man wiche is wyse ought to flee the
felaufship of flaterers / For by flateryng & adu-
lacion many haue ben begyled and deceyued

¶ The xxijij fable is of the oxe and of the rat



He lordes ought to loue theyr sub-
gettis / For he whiche is hated of
his tenaunts and subgrets / is not
lord of his land / as hit appereth
by this Fable / Of an oxe / whiche
somtyme was within a stable / and as the oxe
on a tyme wold haue slepte fayne / a rat came /
whiche bote the oxe by the thyres / And as the
oxe wold haue smyten hym / he ran awaye into
his hole / And thenne the oxe beganne to men-
ace the rat / And the ratte sayd to hym / I am
not aferd of the / And yf thou arte grete / thy
parentes ben cause therof and not thy self / And
therfore the stonge ought not to despeyse the
feble / but ought to loue hym as the chyef or
hede ought to loue his lymmes / For he that
loueth not / oughte not to be loued / And ther-
fore the lord must loue his subgettys / yf of them
he wylle be loued

¶ The xxvij fable is of the goos and of her lord

HE that ouer ladeth hym self/ is euylle strayned/ As this fable sayeth / of a man / whiche had a goos / that leyd euery day an egge of gold / The man of auaryce or couetousnes commaunded and bad to her / that euery daye she shold leye two egges / And she sayd to hym / Certaynly / my mayster I maye not / wherfore the man was wrothe with her / and slewe her / wherfore he lost that same grete good / of the whiche dede he was moche forowful and wrothe/ how be it that it was not tyme to shette the stable whan the horses ben lofte / & gone / And he is not wyse whiche does such a thynge / wherof he shalle repente hym after ward / ne healfo / whiche doth his owne dommage for to auenge hym self on somme other / For by cause that he supposeth to wynne al / he leseth all that he hath.

C The xxv fable is of the ape and of his two
children



E that somtyme men despreyfен /
may wel helpe somme other / as
hit appereth by this Fable of an
Ape / whiche had two children /
of the whiche he hated the one /
& loued the other / whiche he toke in his armes /
and with hym fled before the dogges / And
whanne the other fawe / that his moder lefte
hym behynde / he ranne and lepte on her back /
And by cause that the lytyl ape whiche the she
ape held in her armes empêched her to flee /
she lete hit falle to the erthe / And the other
whiche the moder hated held fast and was
saued / the whiche from thens forthon kyssed
and embrased his moder / And And the thenne
beganne to loue hym wherfore many tymes
it happeth / that that thyng whiche is de-
preyfен / is better than that thyng whiche is
loued and preyfен / For somtyme the children
whiche ben preyfен and loued / done lasse good
than they whiche ben despreyfен and hated

C The xxij fable is of the wynd and of
therthen pot

He that ouer moche enhaunceth hym self/ sooner than he wold/ he falleth doune/ as hit appereth by this fable/ Of an erthen pot maker whiche made a grete pot of erthe/ the whiche he dyd sette in the sonne/ by cause that more surely hit shold haue ben dryed/ Ageynste the whiche came and blewe a grete wynd/ And whanne the wynd sawe the potte he demaunded of hym/ who arte thou/ And the pot ansuerd to hym/ I am a potte the best made that men can fynde/ & none may lette ne empeche me/ And how sayd the wynde/ thou art yet al lofte/ and haft neyther vertue ne none force/ and by cause I knowe wel thy ouer pryd/ I shall breke the/ and putte the in to pyeces/ to thende/ that thou of thy grete pryd mayst haue knowlege/ And therfore the feble ought to meke and humble hym self and obeye to his lord/ and not to enhauce hym more than he ought/ to thende/ he falleth not from hyhe to lowe

¶ The xxvij fable is of the wulf and of the lambe



f two euyls men ought euer to eschewe and flee the worst of bothe / yf ony of them may be eschewed / as hit appiereth by this fable / of a wulf / whiche ranne after a lambe / the whiche lambe fled into the hows where as gotes were / And whan the wulf sawe that he myght in no wyse take the lambe / he sayd to hym by swete wordes / Leue thy felauship / and come with me into the feldes / for yf thou come not / thou shalt be take by them / and shalt be sacryfyed to theyre goddes / And the lamb ansuered to the wulf / I haue leuer to shede al my blood for the loue of the goddes / and to be sacryfyed / than to be eten and deuoured of the / And therfore he is ful of wysedome and of prudence / who of two grete euyls may and can escape the grettest of bothe /

¶ Here synysshen the fables of Auian / And after followen the fables of Alfonce

¶ The fyrt fable maketh mencion of therhortacion of sappence or wylsdome and of loue



Rabe of Lucanye sayd to his sone in
this maner / My sone beware &
loke that the formyce be not
more prudent or wyser / than
thy self / the whiche gadreth &
assembleth to gyder in the somer all that to
her nedeth to haue in the wynter / and beware
that thou slepe no lenger / than the Cocke
doth the whiche watcheth and waketh atte matyns
tyme / and that he be not wyser and more sage
than thy self / the whiche rewleth and gouerneth
wel ix hennes / but hit suffyseth wel / that thou
rewle and gouerne one wel / And also that the
dogge be not more noble than thy self / the
whiche forgeteth neuer the good whiche is done
to hym / but euer he remembryth it / ¶ Item my
sone suppose it not a lytyll thynge to haue a good
Frend but doubte not to haue a thowlsand frendes /
¶ And whanne A rabe wold deye / he demaunded
of his sone / My sone how many good frendes
hast thou / And his sone answerd to hym / My
fader I haue as I suppose an honderd frendes /
And

And the fader ansuerd to hym / beware and loke
wel that thou suppose none to be thy frendes
withouthe that thou haft assayed & proued hym /
For I haue lyued lenger than thy self haste /
& vnnethe I haue gete half a frend / wherfore
I meruaylle moche how thou haft geten so
many frendes / And thenne the fone feynge the
admyracion or wonder of his fader / demaunded
of hym / My fader . I praye yow that ye wylle
gyue to me counceil how I shalle mowe preue
and essaye my frend / And his fader sayd to hym
/ goo thou and kylle a calf / and putte it in a fak
al blody / and bere hit to thy fyrst frend / and
saye to hym that hit is a man whiche thou haft
slayne / And that for the loue of whiche he
louēth the / that he wylle kepe thy mysdede
secretely and burye hit / to thende that he may
sauē the / the which counceyille his fone dyd / to
whome his frend sayd / retorne ageyne to thy
hows / For yf thou haft done euylle / I wylle
not bere the Payne for the / For within my hows
thow shalt not entre / And thus one after other
he assayed alle his frendes / and euery of them
made to hym suche an ansuere as the fyrst dyd /
wherof gretely he was abaffhed / And thenne
he retorneid ageyn to his fader / and told hym /
how he had done / And his fader ansuerd to
hym / Many one ben frendes of wordes only /
but

but fewe ben in fayth or dede / but I shalle telle
to the what thou shalt doo / Goo thou to my
half frende / and bere to hym thy calf / and
thow shalt here and see what he shalle faye to
the / And whanne the sone came to the half
frende of his fader / he sayd to hym as he dyd
to the other / And whanne the half frende vn-
derstode his fayt or dede / he anone toke hym
secretely in to his hows / and ledde hym in to
a sure and obscure place / where he dyd burye
his dede calf / wheroft the sone knewe the trouthe
of the half frendes loue / Thenne the sone of
Arabe torned ageyne toward his fader / and told
to hym all that his half frende had done to
hym / And thenne the fader sayd to his sone /
that the philosopher saith that the very and
trewe frend is fond in the xtreme nede / Thenne
asked the sone of his fader / sawest thou neuer
man whiche in his lyf gate a hole frend / &
his fader said to hym / I sawe neuer none / but
wel haue I herd it fay / And the sone ansuered /
My fader I praye the that thow wylt reherce hit
to me / to thende / that by aduenture I maye
gete suche one / And the fader sayd to hym /
My sone / som tyme haue I herd of two mar-
chaunts whiche neuer had fene eche other / the
one was of Egypte / and the other was of Baldak
but they had knowleche eche of other by theyr
lettres /

lettres / whiche they fente and wrote frendly one to the other / hit befelle thenne that the merchaunt of Baldak came in to egypte for to chepe & bye somme ware or marchaundyse / wheroft his frend was moche gladde / and wente to mete hym and brought him benyngly in to his hows / And after that he had chered and festyed hym by the space of xiiij dāyēs / the same marchaunt of baldak wexed and became feke / wheroft his frend was sorowfull and ful heuy / and Incontynent fente for phisycyens or leches thurugh alle egypte for to recouere his helthe / And whan the medecyns had fene and vysyted hym / and his vryne also / they sayd that he had no bodily sekeness / but that he was rauyfshed by loue / And whan his Frend herd these wordes / he came to hym / and sayd / My frende I pray the / that thou wilt shewe and telle to me thy sekenes / And his frend said to hym I praye the / that thou wylt make to come hyder alle the wymmen and maydens whiche ben in thy hows / for to see / yf she whiche my herte desyreth is emonge them / And anone his Frend made to come before hym bothe his owne doughters & seruants Emonge the whiche was a yonge mayde / whiche he had nouryfshed for his playsyre / And whan the pacyent or feke man fawe her / he sayd to his frend / the same is she whiche maye be cause of

of my lyf or my deth / the whiche his frend gaf
to hym for to be his wyp with alle suche goodes
as he had of her / the whiche he wedded / and
retorned with her in to baldak with grete Joye /
but within a whyle after it happed and fortuned
so that this marchaunt of egypte fylle in pouerte /
and for to haue somme consolacion and comforde
he tooke his way toward baldak / and supposed
to goo and see his frend / And aboute one euen
he arryued to the Cyte / And for as moche that
he was not well arayed ne clothed / he had
shame by daye lyȝt to go in to the hows of his
Frend / but wente and lodged hym withynne a
Temple nyghe to a Frendes hows

¶ It happed thenne that on that fame nyght
that he laye there a man slewe another man
before the yate or entre of the sayd Temple /
wherfore the neyghbours were sore troubled /
And thenne all the peple moeued therof came
in to the Temple / wherin they fond no body
sauf only thegypcyen / the whiche they toke /
and lyke a murderer Interrogod hym why he
had slayne that man whiche lay dede before the
portall or gate of the temple / He thenne feynge
his Infortune and pouerte / confessed / that he
had kylled hym / For by cause of his euyll fortune
he wold rather deye than lyue ony more / wher-
fore he was had before the Juge / and was con-
demned

dempned to be hanged / And whan men ledde
hym toward the galhows / his frend sawe and
knewe hym/ and beganne to wepe fore/ remem-
bryng the bienfayttes whiche he had done to
hym / wherfore he went to the Justyce and sayd /
My lordes this man dyd not the homycyde / For
hit was my self that dyd hit / And therfore ye
shold dogrete synne yf ye dyd put this Innocent and
gyltles to dethe / And anone he was take for be
had vnto the galhows / And thenne the Egypcyen
sayd / My lordes/ he dyd hit not / And therfore
euylle shold ye doo to put him to dethe / And as
the two frendes wold haue been hanged eche
one for other / he whiche had done the homycyde
came and knewe and confessyd there his synne /
and adressed hym self before the Justyce and
sayd / My lordes / none of them bothe hath done
the dede / And therfore punyfhe not ye these
Innocents / For I allone ought to bere the Payne/
whereof all the Justyse was gretely meruaylled /
And for the doubte whiche therin was grete / the
Justyce toke them al thre / & ledde them before
the kyng And when they had reherced to the
kynge all the maner / after enquest theupon
made / and he knewe the very trouthe of hit /
graunted his grace to the murderer / and so alle
thre were delyuerd / And the frend brought his
frend in to hys hows/ and receyued hym Joyously/
and

and after he gaf to hym bothe gold and syluer /
And the egypcyen torned ageyne in to his hows /
And whan the fader had fayd and reherced all
this to his fone / his fone sayd to hym / My fader
I knowe now wel that he whiche may gete a
good frende is wel happy / And with grete labour
as I suppose I shal gete suche one.

C The second fable is of the commyssyon of pecuny
or money



Spaynard arryued somtyme in to
the lande of egipte and by cause
that he doubted to be robbed
within the desertys of Arabe/ he
purposed and bethought in hym
self that it were wyseley done to take his money
to somme trewe man for to kepe hit vnto his
torne ageyne / And by cause that he herd somme
saye / that within the Cyte was a trewe man / he
anone wente to hym / and toke to hym his syluer /
for to kepe hit / And whan he had done his
vyage he came ageyne to hym / and demaunded
of hym his syluer / whiche ansuerd to hym in this
manere / My frend / I ne wote who thow arte /
for I sawe the neuer that I wote of / And yf
thou sayest or spekest ony more wordes / I shalle
make the to be wel bete / Thenne was the
spaynard sorowful and wroth / and therof he
wold haue made a playnte to his neyghbours /
as he dyde / & the neyghbours sayd to hym /
Certaynly / we be wel abafshed of that / that
ye telle to vs / for he is emonge vs alle reputed
and

and holden for a good man and trewe / And therfore retorne ageyne to hym / and by swete wordes telle hym that he wyl rendre to the thy good ageyne / the whiche thynge he dyd / and the old man ansuerd to hym more sharcely and wonderly than he had done before / wherof the spaynard was wonderly wrothe / And as he departed oute of the old mans hows / he mette with an old woman / the whiche demaunded of hym / wherfore he was soo troubled and heuy / And after that he had told to her the cause why / thold woman sayd to hym / make good chere / For yf hit is so as thow sayst / I shalle cunceytle the how thou shalt recouere thy syluer / And thenne he demaūded of her / how hit myght be done / And she sayd to hym bryng hyther to me a man of thy country whome thow trustest / and doo to be made four fayre chestes / and fylle them alle with stones / and by thy felawes thow shalt make them to be borne / in to his hows / and to hym they shalle say / that the marchaūts of spayne send them to hym for to kepe surely / And whan the chestes shalle be within his hows / thow shalt go and demāde of hym thy syluer / whiche thynge he dyd / And as the sayd chestes were borne within his hows / the spaynard wente with them / that bare them / the whiche straungers sayd to the old mā My lord / these
four

four chefes ben al ful of gold / of syluer and of
precious stones / whiche we brynge to yow / as to
the trewest man and feythful that we knowe for
to kepe them surely by cause that we fere and
doubte the theues/ whiche ben within the desert/
After the whiche wordes sayd / came he / whiche
the old woman had counceyld / and demaunded
of hym his syluer And by that cause the old man
doubted / that the spanyard wold haue def-
preyfed hym / he sayd thus to hym / Thow arte
Welcome / I merueyld how thow taryest soo
longe for to come / And Incontynent he restored
to hym his syluer/ And thus by the counceytle
of the woman whiche he gretely thanked / he
had his good ageyn / and retourned ageyne in to
his countrey /

¶ The thyrd fable speketh of a subtile Inuen-
tion of a sentence gyuen upon a derke and
obscure cause.



It befelle somtyme that a good man
labourer wente fro lyf to deth /
the whiche labourer lefte nothyng
to his sone / but only a hows /
the whiche sone lyued by the
laboure of his handes pourely / This yong man
had a neyghbour whiche was made ryche
whiche demaūded of the sayd yong man yf he
wold selle his hows / but he wold not selle it /
by cause that it was come to hym by inherytaūce
and by patrymony wherfore the ryche man his
neygbour conuerfyd & was ful oft with hym for
to deceyue hym / but the yong man fled his
company as moche as he myght / & whan the
ryche man perceyued that the yong man fled
from hym / he bethougth hym self of a grete
deception & falshede / & demaūded of the poure
yong man that he wold hyre to hym a parte of
his hows for to delue & make a celer / the whiche
he shold hold of hym payeng to hym yerely rent /
& the poure yong man hyred it to hym / & whan
the

the celer was made / the ryche man did do bryng
therin x tones of oylle of the which the v were
ful of of oylle / & the the other v were but half
full / & dyd do make a grete pytte in the erthe /
& dyd do put the fyue tonnes whiche were half
ful in hit / & the other fyue aboue them / And
thenne he shytte the dore of the celer / and de-
lyuerd the keye to the poure yonge man / and
prayd hym frawdelently to kepe wel his oylle /
but the poure yonge man knewe not the malyce
and falshede of his neyghboure / wherfore he
was contente to kepe the keye / And within a
whyle after as the oylle became dere / the ryche
came to the poure / and asked hym his good / and
the yong man toke to hym the keye / this Ryche
man thenne sold his oylle to the marchaunts /
and waraunted eche tonne al ful / And when the
marchaunts mesured theyr oylle / they fond but
fyue of the x tonnes full / wherof the ryche man
demaunded of the poure yonge man restitu-
cion / and for to haue his hows he maade hym to
come before the Juge / ¶ And whanne the poure
man was before the Juge / he demaunded terme
and space for to answere / For hym thought and
semed that he had kepte well his oylle / and the
Juge gaf and graūted to hym day of aduys / &
thēne he went to a philosophre which was pro-
curatour of the poure peple / & prayd hym for
charyte /

charyte/ that he wold gyue to hym good coūceylle
of his grete nede / & he reherced and told to hym
al his cause & fwore vpon the holy euangely that
he toke none of the ryche mans oylle/ And
thenne the philosopher ansuerd to hym in this
manere/ My sone / haue no fere / for the trouthe
may not faylle/ And the next morowe after / the
philosopher wente with the poure man in to
Jugement / the whiche philosopher was consti-
tued by the kynge for to gyue the Just sentence
of hit/ And after that the cause had be wel
defended and pleted by bothe partyes / the
philosophre sayd / the same ryche man is of good
renomee/ and I suppose not that he demaunded
more than he should haue/ And also I byleue
not that this poure may be maculed ne gylty of
the blame / which he putteth on hym / but not-
withstondyng for to knowe the trouthe of hit / I
ordeyne and gyue sentence / that the oylle pure
and clene of the v tonnes whiche are ful to be
mesured / and also the lye therof / And after that
the pure and clene oylle of the fyue which been
but half ful to be also measured / and with the lye
thereof / and that men loke yf the lye of the fyue
Tonnes half ful is egal and lyke to the lye of the
fyue Tonnes / whiche ben fulle/ And yf hit be
not soo / that as moche lye be fond within the
vessels whiche ben but half full as in the other/

he

he shalle thenne be fuffysauntly & ryghteoyfly
proued / that none oyle hath be taken oute of
them / but yf ther be fond as moche lye in the
one as in the other / the poure shall be con-
demned / and of this sentence the poure was
contente / & the trouthe was knownen / wherfore
the poure man went quyte / and the ryche was
condempned / For his grete malyce and falsheed
was knownen and manyfested / For there is no
fynne or myfdede done / but that ones it shalle be
knownen and manyfested.

¶ The fourthe fable maketh mencion of the sentence gguen vp the pecuny or money whiche was found.



Ryche man somtyme wente by a Cyte / And as he walked fro one fyde to that other / fyllie fro hym a grete purse / wherin were a thousand Crownes / the whiche a poure man fond / and toke them for to kepe to his wyf / wherof she was ful gladd / and sayd / thanked be god of al the goodes whiche he sendeth to vs / yf he sendeth now this grete somme kepe we hit wel / And on the next morne after folowyng / the Ryche man made to be cryed thurgh the cyte / that who someuer had fond a thowsand Crownes in a purse / he shold restitue / and bryng them to hym ageyne / and that he shold haue for his reward an hondred of them / And after that the poure man had herd this crye / he ranne Incontynent to his wyf / & sayd to her / My wyf / that / that we haue fond must be rendred or yolden ageyne / For hit is better to haue a C crownes withoute fynne than a thowsand with fynne & wrongfully / And how be

be hit that the woman wold haue refyfted /
Neuertheles in thende she was content / And thus
the poure man restored the thowſand crownes to
the Ryche / and demaunded of hym the honderd
crownes / And the ryche full of frawde or falf-
hede sayd to the poure / thow rendreſt not to
me al my gold / whiche thow fondest / For of
hit I lack four honderd pyeſes of gold And
whanne thow ſhalt rendre and bryngē to me
ageyn the ſayd four hondred pyeſes of gold /
thow ſhalt haue of me the C crownes too whiche
I promyſed to the / And thenne the poure anſuerd
to hym / I haue take and brought to the al that
I haue found / wherfore they fyllē in a grete
dyfferent or ſtryf / in ſo moche that the cauſe
came before the kyng / to be decyded and pleyd /
of the whiche the kyng made to be callyd before
hym a grete philosopher whiche was procuratour
of the poures / And whanne the cauſe was wel
disputed / the philosopher moued with pyte /
called to hym the poure man / and to hym feyd
in this maner / Come hyther my frend / by thy
feythe haſt thow reſtored alle that good whiche
thou fondest in the purſe / and the poure anſuerd
to hym / ye fyre by my feythe / And thenne the
philofophre ſayd before thaffistantes / Syth this
ryche man is trewe and feythfull / and that hit
is not to byleue / that he ſhould demaunde more
than

than he ought to doo / he ought to be byleued /
And as to the other parte men muste byleue that
this poure man is of good renomme and knowen
for a trewe man wherfore the philosopher sayd
to the kynge / Syre I gyue by my sentence / that
thow take these thowfand crownes / and that an
C thow take of them / the whiche honderd thow
shalt delyuere to this poure man whiche fond
them / And after whan he that hath lost them
shall come / thow restore them to hym / And yf
it happeth that another persone fynde the thow-
fand & four C crownes / they shal be rendryd
and taken ageyne to the same good man whiche
is here prefent whiche sayth that he hath lost
them / the whiche sentence was moche agreable
and plesaunt to al the companye / And when the
ryche man sawe that he was deceyued / he de-
maunded myserycorde and grace of the kynge
sayenge in this manere / Syre this poure man
that hath fond my purse / trewely he hath re-
stored it to me all that I ouȝt to haue / but
certaynly I wold haue deceyued hym / wherfore
I praye the that thou wylt haue pyte and myserycorde
on me And thenne the kynge had myserycorde
on hym / And the poure man was wel
contented and payd / and al the malyce of the
ryche man was knownen and manyfested

C The v fable is of the fynthe of the thre felawes.



Te it happeth that the euyll whiche
is procured to other cometh to
hym whiche procureth it / as hit
apperyth by the felawes / of the
whiche tweyn were burgeys / &
the thyrd a labourer / the whiche assembled them
to gydre for to go to the holy sepulcre / This
thre felawes made so grete prouyson of flour for
to make theyr pylgremage / in suche wyse / that
it was all chauffed / and consumed / excepte only
for to make one loef only / And whan the
Burgeis sawe thende of theyre floure they sayd
to gyder / yf we fynde not the maner and cau-
tele for to begyle this vylayn / by cause that he
is a rygt grete gallaunt / we shalle deye for hongre/
wherfore we must fynde the maner and facyone
that we may haue the loof whiche shall be maad
of alle oure floor / And therfore they concluded
to gyder and sayd/ whanne the loof shalle be putte
within the ouen we shalle go and lye vs for to
slepe / and he that shalle dreme best/ the loof
shall

shall be his / And by cause that we bothe ben
subtyle and wyse / he shalle not mowe dreme
as wel as we shalle / wherof the loof be ours /
wherof alle they thre were wel content / and al
'byganne to slepe /

¶ But whanne the labourer or vylayne knewe
and perceyued all theyre fallace / and fawe that
his two felawes were a sleep / he wente and
drew the loof oute of the ouen and ete hit /
¶ And after he feyned to be a slepe / and thene
one of the burgeys rose vp / and sayd to hys felawes /
I haue dremed a wonder dreme / For two Angels
haue taken & borne me with grete Joye before
the dyuyn mageste / And the other burgeys his
felawe awoke and sayd / Thy dreme is merueyl-
lous and wonderfull / but I suppose that the myn
is fayrer / than thyn is / For I haue dremed that
two Angels drewe me on hard ground for to
lede me in to helle / And after they dyd awake
the vylayne whiche as dredeful sayd / who is
there / and they ansuerd / we be thy felawes /
And he sayd to them / how be ye foo soone
retourned / And they answerd to hym / how
retorned / we departed not yet fro hens / And he
sayd to them by my feythe / I haue dremed that
the Angels had led one of yow in to paradys or
heuen / and the other in to helle / wherfor I
supposed / that ye shold neuer have comen
ageyne /

ageyne / And therfore I aroos me fro sleep / and
by cause I was hongry / I wente and drewe oute
of the ouen the loef and ete hit / For ofte hit
happeth that he whiche supposeth to begyle
somme other / is hym self begyled.

¶ The vj fable is of the labourer and of the
nyghtyngale



Omtyme there was a labourer /
whiche had a gardeyn wel play-
faunt and moche delycious / in to
the whiche he ofte wente for to
take his desport and playfure /
And on a day at euen when he was very and
had trauaylled sore / for to take his recreacion he
entryd in to his gardyn and sette himself doun
vnder a tree / where as he herd the songe of a
nyghtyngale / And for the grete plesyre and Joye
whiche he took therof / he sought and at the last
fond the meanes for to take the nyghtyngale / to
thende / that yet gretter joye and playfaunce he
myght haue of hit / And whan the nyghtyn-
gale was take / he demaunded of the labourer /
wherfore hast thou take so grete Payne for to
take me / For wel thou knowest that of me
thow mayst not haue grete prouffyte / And the
vylayne ansuerd thus to the nyghtyngale / For to
here the songe of the I haue taken the / And the
nyghtyngale ansuerd Certaynly in vayne thou
hast payned and laboured / For / for no good I
wyll

wylle syngē whyle that I am in pryson / And
thenne the labourer or vylayne ansuerd / yf thou
syngest not wel / I shalle ete the / And thenne
the nyghtyngale sayd to hym / yf thou putte me
within a potte for to be soden / lytyl mete shalt
thou thenne make of my body / and yf thou settest
me for to be rosted / lesse mete shalle be thenne
made of me / And therfor neyther boylded ne
rosted shalle not be thy grete bely fylled of me /
but yf thou lete me flee / hit shall be to the a
grete good prouffyte / For thre doctrynes I shall
teche the whiche thou shalt loue better than
thre fat kyne / and thene the labourer lete the
nyghtyngale flee / And whan he was oute of his
handes / and that he was vpon a tree / he sayd to
the vylayne in this maner / My Frend I haue
promysed to the / that I shall gyue to the thre
doctrynes / wherof the fyrst is this that thou
byleue no thynge whiche is Impoffyble / The
second is that thou kepe wel that thyn is / And
the thyrd is / that thou take no forowe of the
thynge lost whiche may not be recouererd / And
foone after the nyghtyngale beganne to sygne /
& in his songe sayd thus / blesfyd be god / whiche
hath delyuerd me oute of the handes of this
vylayne or chorle / whiche hath not knownen /
fene / ne touched the precious dyamond whiche
I haue within my bely / For yf he had foude
hit /

hit / he had be moche ryche / And fro his handes
I had not scaped / And thenne the vylayne whiche
herd this songe / beganne to complayne and to
make grete forowe . and after sayd I am wel
vnhappy / that haue lost so fayre a tresour /
whiche I had wonne / and now I haue lost hit /
And the nyghtyngale feyd thenne to the chorle /
Now knowe I wel that thow arte a fool / For
thow takeft forowe of that wherof thow sholdest
haue none / and sone thow haft for gotten my
doctryne / by cause that thow wenest that within
my bely shold be a precious stone more of weyght
than I am / And I told and taught to the / that
thow sholdest neuer byleue that thynge / which
is Imposfyble / And yf that stone was thyn / why
haft thow lost hit / And yf thow haft lost hit and
mayft not recouere hit / why takeft thow forowe
for hit / And therfore hit is foly to chaftyse or to
teche a fole / whiche neuer byleueth the lernynge
and doctryne whiche is gyuen to hym.

¶ The bis fable is of a Rethorycian and of a
crouk backed /



Philosopher sayd ones to his sone /
that whan he were falle by fortune /
in to somme dommage or perylle /
the sooner that he myght he shold
delyuere hym of hit / to thende /
that afterward he shold no more be vexed ne
greued of hit / As hit appiereth by this fable of a
rethoryque man or fayr speker / whiche ones
demaunded of a kynge / that of alle them whiche
shold entre in to the cyte / hauynge somme faulte
of . kynde on theyr bodyes / as crouked or coun-
terfayted / he myght haue and take of them at
thentre of the yate a peny / the whiche demaunde
the kynge graunted to hym / and made his lettres
to be sealed and wreton vnder his sygnet / And
thus he kepte hym styll at the yate / And of
euery lame / scabbed / & of alle suche that had
ony counterfaytour on theyr bodyes / he tooke a
peny / ¶ It happed thene on a day that a
croukbacked and counterfayted man wold haue
entryd within the Cyte withoute gyuyng of ony
peny / and bethought hym self / that he shold
take

take and put on hym a fayre mantel / and thus
arayed came to the yate / ¶ And thenne whan
the porter byheld hym / he perceyued that he
was goglyed / and sayd to hym pay me of my
dewte / And the goglyed wold paye nought /
wherfore he toke from hym his mantel / And
thenne he sawe that he was crowkbacked and
sayd to hym / thou woldest not to fore paye a
peny / but now thou shalte paye tweyne / ¶ And
whyle that they ftryued to gyder / the hat and
the bonet felle from his hede to the erthe / And
the porter whiche sawe his scabbed hede / sayd to
hym / Now shalt thou paye to me thre pens /
and thenne the porter yet ageyne setted his
handes on hym / and felte / that his body was al
scabbed / And as they were thus wraftlynge to
gyder / the crowkbacked fylle to the ground /
and hurted hym self sore on the legge / And the
porter sayd thenne to hym / Now shalt thou
paye v pens / For thy body is al counterfayted /
wherfore thou shalt leue here thy mantele / And
yf thou haddest payd a peny / thou haddest gone
on thy waye free and quyte / wherfore he is wyse
that payeth that / that he oweth of ryght / to
thende that therof come not to hym gretter
dommage

¶ The eight fable is of the discyple / and of
the sheep /



Discyple was somtyme / whiche
toke his playfyre to reherce and
telle many fables / the whiche
prayd to his mayster / that he
wold reherce vnto hym a long
fable / To whome the mayster ansuerd / kepe and
beware wel that hit happe not to vs / as it happed
to a kyng and to his fabulatour And the discyple
ansuerd / My mayster I pray the to telle to me
how it befelle / And thenne the mayster sayd to
his descyple / ¶ Somtyme was a kynge whiche
hadde a fabulatour / the whiche reherced to
hym at euery tyme / that he wold sleep fyue
fables for to reioysfhe the kynge / and for to
make hym falle in to a slepe / It befelle thenne
on a daye / that the kynge was moche sorrowful
and so heuy / that he coude in no wyse falle a
slepe / And after that the sayd fabulatour had
told and reherced his fyue fables / the kynge
desyred to here more / And thenne the sayd
fabulatour recyted vnto hym thre fables wel
shorte / And the kynge thenne sayd to hym / I
wold

wold fayne here one wel longe / And thenne
shalle I leue wel the slepe / The fabulatour
thenne reherced vnto hym fuche a fable / Of a
ryche man whiche wente to the market or feyre
for to bye sheep / the which man bought a
thowsand sheep / And as he was retornynge fro
the feyre / he cam vnto a Ryuer / and by cause
of the grete waiues of the water he coude not
passe ouer the brydge / Neuertheles he wente
soo longe to and fro on the Ryuage of the sayd
Ryuer / that at the last he fonde a narowe way /
vpon the whiche myght passe scant ynoch thr
sheep attones / And thus he passed and had them
ouer one after another / And hyderto reherced
of this fable / the fabulatour felle on slepe / And
anon after the kynge awoke the fabulatour / and
sayd to hym in this manere / I pray the that
thow wylt make an ende of thy fable / And the
fabulatour ansuerd to hym in this manere Syre
this Ryuer is ryght grete / and the ship is lytyl /
wherfore late the marshaunt doo pasſ ouer his
sheep / And after I shalle make an ende of my
fable / And thenne was the kynge wel appeased
and pacfyed / ¶ And therfore be thow content
of that I haue reherced vnto the / For there is
folke superstycious or capaxe / that they may not
be contented with fewe wordes

¶ The ix fable is of the wulf / of the labourer /
of the fore / & of the chese



Omtyme was a labourer wiche vnethe myght gourne and lede his oxen by cause that they smote with theyr feet / wherfore the labourer sayd to them / I pray to god that the wulf may ete yow / the whiche wordes the wulf herd / wherfore he hyd hym self nyghe them vnto the nyght / And thenne came for to ete them / ¶ And whanne the nyght was come / the labourer vnbonded his oxen / and lete them goo to his hows / ¶ And thenne whanne the wulf sawe them comynge homeward / he sayd / O thou labourer many tymes on this day thou dydest gyue to me thyn oxen / and therfore hold thy promesse to me / ¶ And the labourer sayd to the wulf / I promyfed to the nought at al / in the presence of whome I am oblyged or bound / I swore not neyther to paye the / and the wulf ansuerd / I shalle not leue the goo / withoute that thou hold to me that / that thou promyfdest and gauest to me / ¶ And as they had soo grete stryf and descencion to gyder / they remytted the

the cause to be discuted or pleted before the Juge/ And as they were sechynge a Juge/ they mette with the foxe/ to whome they recounted or told alle theyr dyffrent and slyf/ ¶ Thenne sayd the Foxe vnto them/ I shalle accorde yow bothe wel/ and I shalle gyue on your caufe or plee a good sentence/ But I must speke with eche one of yow bothe a part or allone/ And they were content/ ¶ And the Foxe wente and told to the labourer/ thow shalt gyue to me a good henne/ And another to my wyf/ And I shalle hit soo make/ that thow with alle thyng oxen shalt frely goo vnto thy hows/ wherof the labourer was wel content/ ¶ And after the foxe wente and sayd to the wulf/ I haue wel laboured and wrought for the/ For the labourer shall gyue to the therfore a grete chese/ and lete hym goo home wyth his oxen/ And the wulf was wel content/

¶ And after the Foxe sayd to the wulf/ come thow wyth me/ and I shalle lede the/ where as the chese is/ ¶ And thenne he ledde hym to and fro/ here and there vnto the tyme that the mone shyned ful bryghtly/ And that they came to a welle/ vpon the whiche the Foxe lept/ and shewed to the wulf the shadowe of the mone/ whiche reluced in the well/ & sayd to hym/ loke now godsep/ how that chese is fayre/ grete

grete and brode / hye the now and goo doun
& after take that cheſe / ¶ And the wulf ſayd
to the Foxe / thow muſt be the fyſte of vs
bothe / that ſhalle goo doun / And yf thow
mayſt not bryngē hit with the / by cauſe of his
greteneſſe / I ſhalle thenne goo doun for to
hele the / And the Foxe was content / by cauſe
two bokettys were there / of whiche as the one
came vpward / the other wente downward / and
the foxe entryd in to one of the ſame bokettis /
and wente doun in to the Welle / And whanne
he was doun / he ſayd to the wulf / godſep come
hyther and hele me / For the cheſe is ſo moche
and ſoo grete that I maye not bere hit vp / and
thenne the wulf was aferd of that the Foxe ſhould
ete hit / entryd wythynne the other boket / and
as faſte as he wente downward / the Foxe came
vpward / and whan the wulf ſaw the Foxe
comynge vpward / he ſayd to hym / My godſep
ye goo hens / thow ſayſt trewe ſayd the Fox /
For thus hit is of the world / For when one
cometh doun / the other goth vpward / and thus
the foxe wente awey / and lefte the wulf within
the welle / And thus the wulf loſt bothe the oxen
and the cheſe / wherfore hit is not good to leue that
whiche is ſure and certayne / For many one ben therof
deceyued by the falſheed and decepcion of the
Aduocate and of the Juges

¶ The x fable is of the husbond and of the
moder & of hys wyf



Omtyme was a merchaunt whiche
marayed hym to a yonge woman /
the whiche had yet her moder on
lyne / It happed that this Mar-
chaunt wold ones haue gone som-
where in to ferre country for to by some ware or
marchaundyse / And as he was goynge / he betoke
his wyf to her moder for to kepe and rewle
her honestly tyll he come ageyne / ¶ His wyf
thenne . by the owne consentynge and wylle of
her moder / enamoured her self of a ryght gen-
tyl / fayre and yong man whiche fournyshed to
thappoyntement / And ones as they thre made
good chere the husbond came ageyne fro the
feyre and knocked at the dore of the hows /
wherfore they were wel abaffshed / Thenne sayd
the old moder thus to them / haue no fere / but
doo as I shalle telle to yow / and care yow not /
And thenne she sayd to the yonge man / hold
this swerd / and goo thow to the yate / and be-
ware thy self that thow faye no word to hym /
but lete me doo / And as the husbond wold haue
entyrd

entryd his hows/ and that he sawe the yong
man holdyng a naked swerd in his handes/ he
was gretely aferd/ And thenne the old woman
sayd to hym/ My sone thou art ryght welcome/
be not aferd of this man/ For thre men ranne
ryght now after hym for to haue slayne hym/
and by aventure he fond the yate open/ and this
is the cause why he came here for to sauе his
lyf/ And thenne the husbond said to them/ ye
haue done wel/ And I can yow grete thanke/
And thus the yonge amerous wente his waye
surely by the subtylyte of the moder/ of his wyf/
to the whiche trusfe thy self not/ and thou shalt
doo as sage and wyse

¶ The xij fable is of an old harlotte or bawde



Noble man was somtyme / whiche
 had a wyf moche chaste and was
 wonder fayr / This noble man
 wold haue go on pylgrimage to
 Rome / and lefte his wyf at home /
 by cause that he knewe her for a chaste and a
 good woman / ¶ It happed on a daye as she
 wente in to the toun A fayre yonge man was
 espryfed of her loue / and took on hym hardynes /
 and requyred her of loue / and promyfed to her
 many grete yestes / But she whiche was good had
 leuer deye than to consealte her therto / wherfore
 the yonge man deyde almooste for forowe / to
 the whiche felawe came an old woman / whiche
 demaunded of hym the cause of his sekenesse /
 And the yonge man manyfested or descouered
 vnto her alle his courage and herte / askynge help
 and cunceyile of her / And the old woman
 wylly and malycious sayd to hym / Be thou
 gladde and Joyous / and take good courage / For
 wel I shalle doo / and brynge aboute thy faytte /
 in soo moche thou shalt haue thy wyll fulfylled /
 And after thys the old bawde wente to her hows /
 and

and maade a lytyl catte which she hadde at
homme to faste thre dayes one after another /
And after she took somme breed with a grete
dele or quantite of mostard vpon hit / and gaf hit
to thys yonge Catte for to ete hit / ¶ And
whanne the Catte smelled hit / she beganne to
wepe and crye / ¶ And the old woman or
Bawde wente vnto the hows of the sayd yonge
woman / and bare her lytyl Catte with her / the
whiche yonge and good woman receyued and
welcomed her moch honestly / by caufe that alle
the world held her for a holy woman / ¶ And
as they were talkynge to gyder / the yong woman
hadde pyte of the catte whiche wepte / And
demaunded of the old woman / what the cat
eyled / And the old woman sayd to her / Ha a
my fayr daughter & my fayre Frend / renewe
not my sorowe / And sayinge these wordes she
beganne to wepe / and sayd / My frend for no
good I wyl tell the cause why my catte wepeth /
And thenn / the yonge woman sayd to her / My
good Moder I praye yow that ye wyll telle me
the cause & wherfor your catte wepeth / And
thenne the old woman sayd to her / My Frend
I wyll wel / yf thou wilt swere that thou shalt
neuer reherce it to no body / to the whiche pro-
misse the good and trewe yonge woman accorded
her self / supposyng / that hit had ben all good
and

and sayd / I wyll wel / And thenne the old woman sayd to her in this manere / My frend this same catte whiche thou feest yonder was my daughter / the whiche was wonder fayre gracious and chafste / whiche a yonge man loued moche / and was so moche espryfes of her loue / that by cause that she refusfed hym / he deyde for her loue / wherfore the goddes hauyng pte on hym / haue torned my daughter in to this catte / And the yonge woman whiche supposid that the old woman had sayd trouthe sayd to her in this manere / Allas my fayr moder / I ne wote what I shalle doo / For siche a caas myght wel happe to me / For in this Towne is a yonge man / whiche deyeth almost for the loue of me / But for loue of my husband / to whome I oughte to kepe chaftyte / I haue not wylle graunte hym / Neuertheles I shalle doo that / that thou shalt counceytle to me / And thenne the old woman sayd to her / My frend haue thou pte on hym as foone as thou mayst / soo that hit befaller not to the lyke as it dyd to my daughter /

¶ The yonge woman thenne answerd to her / and sayd / yf he requyre me ony more / I shalle accorde me with hym / And yf he requyre me no more / yet shalle I profere me to hym / ¶ And to thende / that I offende not the goddes / I shalle doo and accomplyfhe hit / as foone as I maye /

¶ The

¶ The old woman thene took leue of her / and
wente forthwith to the yong man / And to hym
she reherced and told all these tdynges / wherof
hys herte was fylled with Joye / the whiche
anone wente toward the yonge woman / and
with her he fulfylled his wylle / ¶ And thus ye
maye knowe the euyls / whiche ben done by
bawdes and old harlottes / that wold to god /
that they were al brente

C The xij fable is of a blynd man and of
his wyf /

Here was somtyme a blynd man
whiche had a fayre wyf / of the
whiche he was moche Jalous / He
kepte her so that she myght not
goo nowher / For ever he had her
by the hand / And after that she was enamoured
of a gentil felawe / they coude not fynde the
maner ne no place for to fulfylle theyr wyll / but
notwithstandyng the woman whiche was subtyle
and Ingenuous cunceyld to her frende that he
shold come in to her hows / and that he shold
entre in the gardyn and that there he shold
clymme vpon a pere tree / And he did as she
told hym / and when they had made theyr enter-
prise / the woman came ageyne in to the hows /
and sayd to her husbond / My frend I praye yow
that ye wylle go in to our gardyn for to despose
us a lytel whyle there / of the whiche prayer the
blynd man was wel content / and sayd to his
wyf / wel my good frend I will wel / lete vs go
thyder / And as they were vnder the pere tree /
she sayd to her husbond / My frende I praye the
to

to lete me goo vpon the pere tre / And I shalle
gader for vs bothe some fayre peres / wel my
frend sayd the blynd man / I wylle wel & graūt
therto / And when she was vpon the tree / the
yong man begann to shake the pere tree at
one syde / and the yonge woman at the other
syde / And And as the blynd man herd thus hard
shake the pere tree / And the noyse whiche they
made / he sayd to them / Ha a euyelle woman /
how be it that I see hit not / Neuertheles I fele
and vnderstante hit well / But I praye to the
goddes / that they vouchesauf to sende me my
fyght ageyne / And as soone as he had made his
prayer Jupiter rendryd to hym his fyght ageyn
¶ And whanne he fawe that pagent vpon the
pere tree / he sayd to his wyf Ha vnhappy
woman / I shalle neuer haue no Joye with the /
And by cause that the yonge woman was redy
in speche and malycious / she ansuerd forth with
to her husbond / My frend thou arte wel be-
holden and bounden to me / For by caufe and
for the loue the goddes haue restored to the thy
fyght / wherof I thanke alle the goddes and
godeffes whiche haue enhaunced and herd my
prayer / For I defyryng moche that thou myght
see me / cessed neuer day ne nyght to pray them /
that theye wold rendre to the thy fyghte / wher-
fore the goddefesse Venus vysybly shewed her self
to

to me / and sayd / that yf I wold somme play-
fyre to the sayd yonge man the shold restore to
the thy fyght / And thus I am cause of it And
thenne the good man sayd to her / My ryght
dere wyf & good frende / I remercye and thanke
yow gretely / For ryght ye haue and I grete
wronge.

¶ The xiij fable is of the Tayller / of a kynge /
and of his seruaunts



En ought not to doo some other /
that whiche he wold not that it
were done to hym / As it appiereth
by this present fable / of a kynge
whiche had a tayller whiche was
as good a workman of his craft / as ony was at
that tyme in alle the world / the whiche tayller
had with hym many good seruauntes / wheroft
the one was called Medius / whiche furmounted
alle the other in shapynge or fewynge / wherfore
the kyng commaunded to his stward that
the sayd tayllers shold fare wel / and haue of the
best metes and of delycious drynke / ¶ It happed
on a daye that the mayster Steward gaf to them
ryght good and delycious mete in the whiche
was some hony / And by cause that Medius was
not atte that feste / the stward sayd to the other /
that they shold kepe for hym somme of their
mete / And thenne the mayster tayller ansuerd /
he must none haue / For yf he were here / he
shold

shold not ete of hit / For he ete neuer no hony /
And as they had done / Medius came / and de-
maunded of his felawes / why kepte you not
parte of this mete for me / And the styward
ansuerd and sayd to hym / By cause that thy
mayster sayd to me / that thow ete neuer no
hony / no parte of the mete was kepte for the
And Medius ansuerd thenne neuer one word /
but beganne to thynke / how he myght paye his
mayster / And on a day as the styward was allone
with Medius / he demaunded of Medius / yf he
knewe no man that coude werke as wel as his
mayster / And Medius sayd nay / And that it
was grete dommage of a sekenes that he had /
And the styward demaunded what sekenes hit
was / And thenne Medius ansuerd to hym / My
lord whan he is entryd in to his fransy or
wodenes / there cometh vpon hym a rage / And
how shalle I knowe hit sayd the styward / Cer-
tainly my lord sayd Medius / whan ye shall see
that he shalle sette at his werke / and that he
shalle loke here and there / and shal smyte vpon
his borde with his fyf / theſe may ye know
that his sekenesse cometh on hym / And thene
withouthe ye take and bynde hym and also bete
hym wel / he shalle doo grete harme and dom-
mage / And the styward sayd to hym / Care not
therof my frend / For wel I shalle beware my
ſelf

self of hym / And on the mornynge next folowynge the styward came for to see the tayllers / And whan Medius whiche knewe wel the cause of his comynge / tooke awaye secretely his maysters sheres / and hydde them / And anone his mayster beganne for to loke after them / and sawe and ferched al aboute here and there / and beganne to smyte his fyfe vpon the borde / And thenne the mayster styward beganne to loke on his maners / and sodenly made hym to be take - and holde by his seruaunts / And after made hym to be bond and wel beten / Thenne was the mayster tayller al abashed / and demaūded of them / My lordes wherfor doo ye bete me soo outrageously / what offense haue I done / wherfore I must be bound and thus be bete / And thenne the Styward sayd to hym in thys maner / by cause that Medius told me / that thou art frantyk And yf thou be not wel bete / thou sholdest doo grete harme and dommage / And thene the mayster came to his seruaunt Medius and rygorously sayd to hym / Ha a euyl boye fylled whan [with] enytle wordes / whan sawest thou me madde / And his seruaunt proudlye ansuerd to hym / My mayster whan dydest thou see that I ete no hony / And therfore I threwe to the one bole for another / And the mayster styward / and alle his seruaunts beganne thenne to lawhe

lawhe / and sayd al that he hadde wel done /
¶ And therfore men ought not to doo to ony
other that thyng whiche they wylle not that
men dyd to them /

¶ Here enden the fables of Alfonce
¶ And folowen other fables of Poge the floter-
typ

¶ The fyrt fable is of the subtylte of the woman
for to deceyue her husband



He cautele or falphede of the woman
is wonder merueyllous / as it ap-
piereth by this fable / Of a mar-
chaūt whiche was wedded of newe
vnto a fayre and yong woman /
the whiche marchaunt wente ouer the see for to
bye & selle / and for to gete somwhat for to lyue
honestly / And by cause that he dwellyd to longe/
his wyf supposed that he was dede / And ther-
fore she enamoured her self with another man /
whiche dyd to her mykle good / as for to haue
doo make and bylde vp his hows of newe the
whiche had grete nede of reparacion / and also he
gaf to her all new utensyles to kepe housshold /
And within a long tyme after the departyng of
the marchaunt he came ageyne in to his hows
whiche he fawe newe bylded / & fawe dysfhes
pottes / pannes / and fuche other housshold / wher-
fore he demaunded of his wyf how and in what
maner she had foūde the facion and the mean
for to haue repayred so honestly his hows / And
she ansuerd that it was by the grace of god / And
he

he ansuerd / Bleffyd be god of hit / And when he
was within the chambre / he fawe the bedde
rychely couerd / & the walles wel hanged / and
demaunded of his wyf he had done before / And
she thenne ansuerd to hym in lyke maner as she
dyd before / And therfore he thanked god as he
had done to fore / And as he wold sette hym at
his dyner / there was brought before hym vnto
his wyf a child of thre yere of age / or there
aboute / wherfore he demaunded of his wyf /
My frend to whome belongeth this fayre child /
And she ansuerd / My Frend the holy ghoost of
his grace hath fente hit to me / Thene ansuerd
the merchaunt to his wyf in this manere / I
rendre not graces ne thankes not to the holy
ghoost of this / For he hath taken to moche
payne and labour for to haue it made up myn
owne werke / And I wyll that in no maner wyse
he medle no more therwith / For suche thynge
belongeth to me for to doo hit / and not to the
holy ghoost.

C The second fable is of the woman and of
the hypocrite



He generacion or byrth of the hypocrite is moche dampnable and euylle/ As it appiereth by this fable/ and as poge reherceth to vs whiche sayth/ that somtyme he fond hym self in a good felauship/ where he herd a fable/ whiche was there reherced/ Of the whiche the tenour foloweth/ and seyth the sayd poge/ that of alle the goodes of this world/ the hypocrites ben possessours/ For how be hit/ that an hypocrite haue somtyme wylle for to helpe somme poure and Indygent/ Neuertheles he hath a condycyon within hym self/ that is to wete/ that he shold rather fee a man at the poynct of dethe than for to saue his lyf of an halfpeny/ And this presumpcion is called hypocrysye/ as ye shal here herafter by the fable folowyng the whiche sayth that one beyng in the felauship of Poge reherced/ that somtyme the customme of alle the poure was that they wente before the folkes dores withoute sayenge ony word It happed thenne on that tyme that a poure man moche

moche faire and of good lyf wente to ferceh
his lyf fro one dore to another/ And vpon a
day emonge other he wente and sette hym self
vpon a grete stone before the yate of a wydowe/
whiche wydowe was acustommed to gyue hym
euer somwhat/ ¶ And whan the good woman
knewe that he was at hir dore she dyd brynge
to hym his porcion as she was custommed for to
doo/ And as she gaf to hym the mete she loked
on hym/ and feyng hym soo fayre/ and wel
made of body/ she thenne fylled of carnal con-
cupiscence/ and brennyng in the fyre of loue/
requered and Instantly prayd hym that he wold
retorne thyder within thre dayes/ and promyfed
to him that she shold gyue to hym a ryght good
dyner/ And the poure man sayd to her that he
shold doo foo/ and whanne he came ageyne/ he
sette hym self as before/ atte dore of the wydowes
hows/ whiche the woman knewe well whanne
he shold come/ wherfore shē came to the yate
and sayd/ Come within good man/ For now we
shalle dyne/ to the whiche prayer the poure
man assented/ & entred within the hows/ the
whiche wydowe gaf to hym good mete/ and
good drynke/ And whanne they had wel dyned/
the sayd wydowe pressyd the good man strongly
and after she kyssed hym/ requyryng hym/ that
she might haue the copye of his loue/ And thēne
the

the poure man al ashamed & vergoynous knowynge her thoughte and her wylle/ ansuerd thus to her Certaynly my good lady I dare not/ but neuertheles he wold fayne haue done hit/ And the wydowe al embrased with loue beseched and prayd hym more and more/ And thenne whan the poure man sawe that he myght not excuse hym self/ he sayd to the wydowe in this manere/ My frend syth that thou defyrefst it for to doo soo moche and soo grete an euylle/ I take god to my wytnes / that thou arte causer of hit/ For I am not confentyng to the faytte or dede/ but sayenge these wordes he consented to her wylle

¶ The thyrd fable is of a yonge woman whiche accused her hysbond of coulpe or blame

[Omitted. Cf. Poggio *Facetiae* 45.]

¶ The fourth fable is of the hunteynge and
hawkyng



Oge Florentyn reherceth to vs / how
ones he was in a felauship where
men spak of the superflue cure of
them whiche gourne the dogges
and hawkes / wherof a mylannoys
named Paulus beganne to lawhe / and lawhyng
requyred of Poge that he wold reherce somme
fable of the sayd hawkes / And for loue of alle
the felauship he sayd in thys manere / Somtyme
was a medecyn whiche was a Mylannoys This
medecyn heled al foles of al maner of foly / and
how & in what manere he dyd hele them / I
shall telle hit to you This medecyn or leche had
within his hows a grete gardyn And in the
myddes of hit was a depe and a brode pytte /
whiche was ful of stynkyng and Infected water /
And within the same pytte the sayd medecyn
put the foles after the quantyte of theyr folyssh-
nes / somme vnto the knes / and the other vnto
the bely / And there he bonde them fast at a
post / but none he putte depper / than vnto the
stomack for doubte of gretter Inconuenient / It
happed

happed thenne that emonge other was one
brought to hym / whiche he putte in to the sayd
water vnto the thydes / And whan he had be by
the space of xv dayes within the sayd water / he
beganne to be peafyble and gate his wytte ageyne /
And for to haue take somme disporte and consola-
cion he prayd to hym whiche had the kepyng
of hym that he wold take hym oute of the water /
and promyfed to hym that he shold not departe
fro the gardyn / And thenne the kepar that kepte
hym vnbounde hym fro the stake / and had hym
oute of the water / And whanne he had be
many dayes oute of the pytte / he wente wel vnto
the yate of the gardyn / but he durst not go oute /
lesse that he shold be put ageyne within the sayd
pytte / And on a tyme he went aboue vpon the
yate / and as he loked al aboue / he sawe a fayr
yong man on a horsbak / whiche bare a spere-
hawk on his fyste / and had with hym two fayre
spaynels / whereof the sayd fole was al abashed /
And in dede as by caas of nouelte / he callyd
the sayd yong man / and after he sayd to hym
benyngly / My frend I praye the that thou wilt
telle me what is that wherupon thou arte sette /
And thenne the yonge sone sayd to hym / that
it was a hors whiche prouffited to hym to the
chace / and bare hym where he wold / And after
the fole demaunded of hym / And what is that
whiche

whiche thou bereft on thy fyfte / and wher to is
it good / and the yong man ansuerd to hym / It
is a sperehawk whiche is good for to take par-
tryches and quaylles / And yet ageyne the fole
demaunded of hym / My frend what are thoos
that folowe the / & wherto ben they good / And
the yonge man ansuerd to hym / they be dogges
whiche are good for to ferche and fynde partryches
& quaylles / And whan they haue reyfed them/
my sperehawke taketh them / wheroft proceedeth
to me grete solas and playfyre / And the fole
demaunded ageyne / To your aduys the takyng
that ye doo by them in a hole yere / how moche
is hit / shalle hit bere to the grete prouffyte/
And the yong man ansuerd to hym four or fyue
crownes or ther aboute / And no more sayd the
fole / And to your aduys how moche shalle they
dispende in a yere / And the yong man ansuerd
xl or l crownes / ¶ And whanne the fole herd
these wordes / he sayd to the sayd yonge man / O
my frend I pray the that soone thow wylt departe
fro hens / For yf our fyficien come / he shalle
putte the within the sayd pytte by cause that
thow arte a fole / I was put in it vnto the thyes/
but therin he shold putte the vnto the chynne/
for thow doft the grettest foly that euer I herd
speke of / ¶ And therfore the studye of the
huntynge and hawkynge is a flouful cure / And
none

none ought to doo hit withoute he be moche
ryche and man of lyuelode / And yet hit ought
not to be done ful ofte / but somtyme for to take
disporte and solas / and to dryue awey melan-
cholye.

¶ The b fable is of the recytacion of somme
monstres



Oge of Florence recyteth how in his
tyme one named Hugh prynce
of the medycyns / sawe a catte
whiche had two hedes and a
calf whiche also had two hedes
And his legges bothe before and behynde were
double / as they had be Joyned al to gyder /
as many folke sawe / Item about the marches
of ytalye withynne a medowe was somtyme a
Cowe / the whiche Cowe maade and delyuerd
her of a serpent of wonder and Ryght merueyl-
lous greteneffe / Ryghte hydous and ferdful /
¶ For fyrfte he hadde the heede gretter than the
hede of a calf / ¶ Secondly / he had a necke of
the lengthe of an Asse / And his body made after
the lykenesse of a dogge / and his taylle was
wonder grete / thycke and longe withoute com-
panyson to ony other .

¶ And whanne the Cowe sawe that she hadde
maade suche a byrthe / And that within her
bely she had borne soo ryght horrable a beefe /
she was al ferdful / and lyfte her self up / and
supposed

supposed to haue fledde aweye/ but the Serpent with his wonder longe taylle enlaced her two hynder legges/ And the Serpent theenne beganne to souke the Cow/ And in dede foo moche/ and soo longe he souked tylle that he fond somme mylke/ ¶ And whanne the Cowe myght escape fro hym/ the fledde vnto the other kyne/ ¶ And Incontynent her pappes and her behynder legges and all that the Serpent touched was all black a grete space of tyme ¶ And soone after the sayd Cowe maade a fayre calf/ The whiche merueylle was announced or sayd to the sayd Pope he beyng atte Ferrare/

¶ And yet ageyne soone after that/ ther was fond within a grete Ryuer a monstre maryn/ or of the see of the forme or lyknesse whiche foloweth/

¶ Fyrste he hadde from the nauylle vpward the symplytude or lykenesse of a man/ And fro the nauylle dounward/ he had the fourme or makyng of a Fyfhe/ the whiche parte was iumelle that is to wete double/ ¶ Secondly he hadde a grete berd/ and he hadde two wonder grete hornys aboue his eres/ ¶ Also he hadde grete pappes/ and a wonder grete and horrable mouthe/ and his handes retched unto his entraylles or bowellys/ And at the bothe his elbowes he hadde wynges ryght brode and grete
of

of fysshes mayles / wherwith he swymmed / and only he hadde but the hede oute of the water / ¶ It happed thenne as many wymmen bouked and wesshed at the porte or hauen of the sayd Ryuer / that thys horrable and ferdfull beeste was / for lacke and defaulte of mete cam & swymmyng toward the sayd wymen / Of the which he toke one by the hand / and supposed to haue drawe her in to the water / but she was stronge / and wel auyfed and refysted ageynste the sayd monstre / And as she defended her self / she beganne to crye with a hyhe voys / help help / to the whiche came rennyng fyue wymmen / whiche by hurlynge and drawynge of stones kyld and flewe the sayd monstre / For he was come to ferre within the sonde / wherfore he myght not retorne in the depe water / And after whanne he rendryd his spryte / he made a ryght lytyl crye / sayenge wo that he was so deformed and so moche cruel / For he was of grete corpulence more than ony man's body / And yet sayth Poge in this manere / that he beyng at Ferrare he sawe the sayd monstre / And faith yet / that the yonge children were customed for to go bathe and wesshe them within the sayd Ryuer / but they came not all ageyne / wherfore the wymen wesshed ne bouked nomore theyr clothes at the said porte / For the folke presumed and supposed
that

that the monstre kyld the yonge children / whiche
were drowned / ¶ Item also within a lytyl whyle
after hit befelle aboute the marches of ytaly that
a child of fourme humayne whiche hadde two
hedes and two vyfages or faces beholdyng one
vpon the other / & the armes of ech other
embraced the body / the whiche body fro the
nauyl vpward was Joyned sauf the two hedes /
and from the nauyll douoward the lymmes were
all separed one fro other in suche wyse that
the lymmes of generacion were shewed many-
festedly / Of the whiche child the tydynge came
vnto the persone of the pope of Rome

¶ The syxthe fable is of the parson / of his
dogge / And of the Bisshop



Yluer dothe and causeth alle thyng
to be done vnto the halowynge
ageyne of a place whiche is pro-
phane or Interdicte / As ye shalle
mowe here by thys presente Fable /

¶ Of a preeft dwellynge in the countrey whiche
somtyme had a dogge / whiche he loued moche /
the whiche preeft was moche ryche / The sayd
dogge by processe of tyme deyde / & whan he was
dede / he entered and buryed hit in the chirche
yerd for cause of the grete loue whiche he loued
hym / it happed thenne on a day his bisshop
knewe hit by thaduertyfement of somme other /
wherfore he sente for the sayd preeft / and sup-
posed to haue of hym a grete somme of gold /
or els he shold make hym to be straytly punyfshed /
And thenne he wrote a lettred vnto the sayd preeft
of whiche the tenour conteyned only that he
shold come and speke with hym / And whan the
preest had redde the lettred / he vnderstood wel
alle the caas / and presupposed or bethought in
his courage / that he wold haue of hym somme

syluer /

u

syluer / For he knewe wel ynough the condy-
cions of his bisshop / & forth with he toke his
breuyarye / & an C crownes with hym / the pre-
late beganne to remembre and to shewe to hym
the enormyte of his mysdede / And to hym
answerd the preest whiche was ryght wyse say-
enge in this manere / O my ryght reuerende
fader / yf ye knewe the souerayne prudence of
whiche the sayd dogge was fylled / ye shold not
be merueylled yf he hath wel desernyd for to be
buried honestly and worshipfully amonge the men /
he was al fylled with humayn wytte as wel in his
lyf / as in thartycle of the dethe / And thenne the
bisshop sayd / how may that be / reherce to me
thenne al his lyf / Certaynly ryght reuerende fader
ye ought wel to knowe that whanne he was atte
thartycle and at the poynt of dethe / he wold
make his testament / And the dogge knowyng
your grete nede and Indygence / he bequethed
to yow an C crownes of gold / the whiche I
brynge now vnto yow / And thenne the Bisshop
for loue of the money he affoylled the preest And
also graunted the sayd sepulture / And therfore
syluer caufeth alle thyng to be graunted or
done.

16

¶ The viij table is of the Foxe of the Cock and of
the dogges



alle the fallary or payment of them
that mokken other is for to be
mocqued at the laſt / as hit ap-
piereth by this present Fable / of
a Cock whiche somtyme ſawe a
fox comyng toward hym ſore hongry and
famyſhēd / whiche Cock ſuppoſed Wel that he
came not toward hym / but for to ete ſomme
henne / for whiche cauſe the Cock maade al his
hennes to flee vpon a tree / And whan the foxe
beganne tapproche to the ſaid tree / he began to
crye toward the cock good tydyngeſ good tyd-
ynges / And after he ſalewed the cok ryght
reuerently / & demaunded of hym thus / O god-
ſep / what doſt thou ther ſoo hyghe / And thy
henneſ with the / haſt not thou herd the good
tydyngeſ worthy and prouffitable for vs ¶ And
thenne the Cok ful of malyce anſuerd to hym /
Nay veryly godſep / but I praye the / telle and
reherce them vnto vs / Thenne fayd the foxe to
the cok / Certaynly godſep / they be the beſt
that euer ye herd / For ye may goo and come /
talke

talke and communyque emong alle bestes with-
oute ony harme or dommage / And they shalle
doo to yow bothe pleasyr and alle seruysse to
them possible / for thus it is concluded and
accorded / and also confermed by the grete
cunceyll of all bestes / And yet they haue made
commaundement that none be so hardy to vexe
ne lette in no wyse ony other / be it neuer foo
lytyll a best / For the whiche good tdynges I
praye the / that thow wylt come doun / to
thende / that we may goo and synge / Te deum
laudamus / for Joye / And the cok whiche
knewe wel the fallaces or falshede of the foxe
ansuerd to hym in this manere / Certaynly my
broder and my good Frend thow haft brought to
me ryght good tdynges / wherof more than C
tymes I shalle thanke the / And fayenge these
wordes the Cock lyfte vp his neck / and his feet /
and loked farre fro hym / And the foxe sayd to
hym / what godsep / where aboute lokest thow /
And the Cok ansuerd to hym / Certaynly my
broder I see two dogges strongly and lyghtly
rennyng hytherward with open mouthes /
whiche as I suppose come for to bryng to vs
the tdynges whiche thou haft told to vs / And
thenne the Foxe whiche shoke for fere of the
two dogges sayd to the Cock / god be with you
my frend / It is tyme that I departe fro hens / or
these

these two dogges come nerer / And fayinge these
 wordes toke his waye / & ranne as fast as he
 myght / And thenne the cock demaunded and
 cryed after hym / godsep / why rennest thou
 thus / yf the sayd paſte is accorded / thou oughtest
 not to double no thyng / Ha a godsep sayd the
 Foxe from ferre / I double that these two dogges
 haue not herd the decreet of the pees / And
 thus whanne a begyler is begyled / he receyued
 the fallary or payement / whiche he ought to
 haue / wherfore lete euery man kepe hym self
 ther fro



8 Ogius reherceth that there were two
 wymmen in Rome / whiche he
 knewe of dyuerse age and forme /
 which came to a Curteyzan by
 cause to haue and wynne somwhat
 wyth theyr bodyes / whome he receyued and
 happed that he knewe the fayrest of bothe twyes /
 and that other ones / and soo departed / And
 afterward whanne they shold departe / he gaf to
 them a pyece of lynen clothe / not decernyng
 how moche eche of them shold haue to her
 parte and porcion / And in the partyng of the
 sayd clothe fylle bitwene the wymmen a ftryf by
 cause

cause one of them demaunded two partes after
thexygence of her werke / And that other the
half after theyre persones / eche of them shew-
ynge dyuersly theyr resons / that one sayeng that
she hadde suffred hym twyes to doo his pleasyr /
and that other pretended / that she was redy and
in her was no defawte And soo fro wordes they
came to strokes and cratchyng with naylys /
and drawyng theyr here / in so moche that
theyr neyghbours came to this batayll for to
departe them / And also of theyr owne and
propre husbondes / not knowynge the cause of
theyr stryf and debate / eche of them defendynge
his wyues cause / And fro the fyghtynge of the
wymmen hit aroos and came to theyr husbondes
with buffettis and castynge of stones / soo longe
that men ranne bytwene them / And after
the customme of Rome bothe the husbondes
were brought to pryon berynge enemyte eche
to other / & knewe no thynge the cause wher-
fore / The sayd cloth is sette in the handes of
the wymen secretely yet not departed / but is
secretely argued amonge the wymmen in what
wysse that this mater shal be deuyded / And I
demaunde of doctoures what the lawe is of it

¶ He sayeth also that a marchaunt of Florence
bought an hors of a man / and made his couenaunt
with

with the sellar for xxv ducattes for to paye forth-
with in bande xv ducattes / And as for the rest
he shold abyde dettour and owe / And the sellar
was content / and therupon delyuerd the hors and
receyued the xv ducattes / After this a certayne
terme the sellar demaunded of the byar the
refydue / And he denyed the payment / & had
hym hold his couenant / For the byer sayd we
were accorded that I shold be thy debtour / And
yf I shold satyifye and paye the I shold nomore
be thy dettour/ et cetera/ and soo he abode
dettour

15

13



E telleth also that ther was a carryk
of Jene hyred in to frauce for to
make warre ayenst englischmen /
of the whiche caerrick the patron
bare in his sheld painted an oxe
hede / whiche a noble man of frauce beheld and
sawe / & sayd he wold auenge hym on hym that
bare tho armes / wherupon aroos an altercacion
so moche / that the frensishman prouoked the
Janueye to bataylle and fyght therfore / The
Januey acceptyd the prouocacion / & came at
the day assignd in to the felde withoute ony
araye or habyllements of warre / And that other
frensish man came in moche noble apparayl in
to the feld that was ordeyned / & thēne the
patrone of the carrik said wherfore is it that
we two shold this day fyght & make bataill fore
I saye said that other that thyn armes ben myn /
& bylonged to me to fore that thou haſdest
them / Thenne the Januey said It is no nede to
make ony bataylle therfore / For the armes that
I bere is not the hede of an oxe but it is the hede
of a cowe whiche thynge so spoken the noble
Frensish man was abashed and so departed half
mocqued

14

11



Also he faith that ther was a phisycyen
 dwellyng in a Cyte / whiche was
 a grete & a connyng man in that
 scyence / & he had a seruau^t a
 yong man whiche made pylles
 after a certayne forme that he shewed to hym /
 & whan this yong man / had dwellid long with
 hym / & coude parf^tly make the pylles / he
 departed fro his mayster / and went in to stra^{ge}
 countre where as he was knowen / and lete men
 there to vnderstonde that he was a connyng
 phisycyen / and coude gyue medycynes for al
 maner maladyes and sekenesses / and mynifyred
 alwey his pylles to euery man that came to hym
 for ony remedy / And hit was soo that a poure
 man of that place where he was came to hym / and
 complayned how he had loste his asse / and prayd
 hym to gyue to hym a medycyne for to fynde
 his asse ageyne / And he gaf to hym the sayd
 pylles / & badde hym to receyue and take them /
 And he shold fynde his asse / And this poure
 man dyd soo / and after wente in to the feldes
 and pastures to seke and loke after his asse / And
 soo doyng the pylleys wrongth soo in his bely /
 that he must nedes go purge hym / and went
 amonge

amonge the reed and there easyd hym / And anonet here he fonde his asse / wherof he beyng moche Joyeful ranne in to the toune / and told and proclaimed / that by the medecyn that he had receyued of the phisycyen he had found his asse / whiche thynge knownen alle the symple peple reputed hym for a moche connynge man / whiche coude no thynge doo but make pyllyes / And thus many fooles are ofte taken for wyse and connynge / For he was reputed to hele all maner fekenesses / and also to fynde asses.



Here was in a certayne towne a wydower wowed a wydowe for to haue and Wedde her to his wyf / And at the last they were agreed and fured to gyder / ¶ And whan a yonge woman beynge seruaunt with the wydowe herd therof / she came to her maystresse / and sayd to her / Allas maystresse what haue ye doo / why sayd she / I haue herd say sayd the mayde / that ye be assured and shalle wedde suche a man / And what thenne sayd the wydowe / Allas sayd the mayde I am sory for yow / by cause I haue herd saye that he is a peryllous man / For he laye so ofte and knewe

fo

so moch his other wyf that she deyde therof /
 And I am sory therof / that yf ye shold falle in
 lyke caas / to whome the wydowe answerd and
 sayd / Forsothe I wold be dede / For ther is but
 forowe and care in this world / This was a
 curteys excuse of a wydowe



Ow thenne I wylle fynysshe alle
 these fables wyth this tale that
 foloweth whiche a worshipful
 preeft and a parfone told me late/
 he sayd / that there were duel-
 lynge in Oxenford twor prestes bothe maystres of
 arte / of whome that one was quyck and coude
 putte hym self forth / And that other was a good
 symple preeft / And soo it happed that the
 mayster that was perte and quyck was anone
 promoted to a benefyce or tweyne / and after to
 prebendys / and for to be a Dene of a grete
 prynces chappel / supposyng and wenynge that
 his felaw the symple preeft shold neuer haue be
 promoted but be alwaye an Annuel / or at the
 most a paryfhe preeft / So after longe tyme that
 this worshipful man this dene came rydynge in
 to a good paryffh with a x or xij horses / lyke a
 prelate / and came in to the chirche of the sayd
 paryfhe / and fond there this good symple man
 fomtyme

somtyme his felawe / whiche cam and welcomed
hym lowely / And that other badde hym good
morowe mayster Johan / and toke hym fleyghtly
by the hand / and axyd hym where he dwellyd /
And the good man sayd in this parysh / how
sayd he / are ye here a sowle preest or a parysh
preste / nay syr said he / for lack of a better
though I be not 'able ne worthy I am parson
and curatē of this paryshe / and thenne that
other aualed his bonet and said mayster par-
son I praye yow to be not despleasyd / I had
supposed ye had not be benefyced / But mayster
sayd he / I pray yow what is this benfyce worth
to yow a yere / Forsothe sayd the good symple
man / I wote neuer / for I make neuer accomptes
thereof / how wel I haue had hit four or fyue
yere / And knowe ye not said he what it is
worth / it shold feme a good benefyce / no For-
sothe sayd he / But I wote wel what it shalle be
worth to me / Why sayd he / what shalle hit be
worth / Forsothe sayd he / yf I doo my trewe
delygēce in the cure of my paryshēs in prechynge
and techynge / and doo my parte longynge to
my cure / I shalle haue heuen therfore / And yf
theyre fowles ben lost or ony of them by my
defawte / I shall be punysshed therfore / And
herof am I sure / And with that word the ryche
dene was abafshed And thought he shold be the
better /

better / And take more hede to his cures and
benefyces than he had done / This was a good
answere of a good preest and an honest /

And here with I synyshe this booke / translated
& emprynted by me William Caxton at
Westmynster in thabbezey / and synysshed
the xxvj dage of Marche the yere
of oure lord MCCCC lxxxvij /
And the syrft yere of the
regne of Kyng Rych-
ard the thyrde.

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Those in Gothic are in the original Caxton.

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